

A GAME OF DRONES:
COMPARING THE U.S. AERIAL ASSASSINATION CAMPAIGN
IN YEMEN AND PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

To combat the terrorist threat the United States faces in Yemen and Pakistan, Remotely Piloted Vehicles have been employed to deter, deflect, and defend. These RPV's operate thousands of miles from the closest military base in states that are not officially engaged in war. In these sovereign lands, cultures that have existed for thousands of years are torn between corrupt governments, terrorist insurgency cells, and sudden death from above. Reports on whether the aerial assassination campaign has impacted terrorist activity have been interpreted very differently among analysts. This thesis will explore how RPV's have affected foreign policy, terrorism, and the security threats these places pose to the United States. Answers to these questions directly affect the future of international law, and how war will be waged in future combat.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| AQAP | al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula |
| CENTCOM | Central Command |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CT | Counterterrorism |
| DCIA | Director of the Central Intelligence Agency |
| DNI | Director of National Intelligence |
| FATA | Federally Administered Tribal Areas |
| ISI | Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Agency |
| JSOC | Joint Special Operations Command |
| RPS | Remotely Piloted System |
| PSO | Political Security Organization |
| RPV | Remotely Piloted Vehicle |
| SOFA | Status of Forces Agreement |
| TTP | Tehrik-i-Taliban |
| UAV | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In 1917, the United States used airplanes to help win the Allied battle in WWI, just ten years after they were invented. One hundred years later, the United States is using the War on Terror as the battleground to test its newest weapon. It goes by many names: drone, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), or Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV). For the purposes of this work, RPV or RPS (remotely piloted system), will be used.

Remotely piloted vehicle refers to the drone itself, whereas remotely piloted system encompasses all support, processing, analysis, and dissemination infrastructure. Above all, the drone is a piece of technology that has raised controversy and adamant defense. RPV aerial strikes have been chosen as the most effective method with the highest cost-benefit analysis for anti-terror operations in Pakistan and Yemen. Many issues have developed as RPV's are used more often, including their moral and legal status. More importantly, is their use the best possible solution to security threats in these two states, and if not, then what is? This thesis will deal with answering these questions, as well as provide a historical and cultural context for the arguments. By comparing two case studies of RPV usage- Yemen and Pakistan- an objective conclusion will be delineated as to how RPV's have impacted radicalization in these two states and what this means for U.S. national security. By using Yemen and Pakistan as a model, RPV's as a strategy of unconventional warfare will be deduced.

There are two different RPV's that are in operation by the United States, the Predator and the Reaper, both being medium altitude, long endurance unmanned aerial

vehicles. They are kinetic, offensive, highly aggressive counterterrorism tools which policy makers intend to be used abroad against people who present a security threat to the United States while maintaining the sovereignty of the state where the strike takes place. Currently, the United States has approximately 7,500-8,000 RPV's that are used for a wide variety of missions, however only around 300 of these possess strike capabilities. Those RPV's with strike capabilities carry a payload of two to four Hellfire anti-tank air-to-ground missiles and two five hundred pound bombs, with the weapons capable of in-flight laser guided control or GPS guidance for increased accuracy. When fired, these weapons travel faster than the speed of sound so that their targets will not hear them approachⁱ. An unarmed Predator can persist over a target for up to forty hours of surveying, while a fully armed Predator, or its larger cousin the Reaper, can remain aloft for fourteen hoursⁱⁱ. In 2012, approximately 420 targeted killings were conducted in Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia, 95% of which were carried out by RPV'sⁱⁱⁱ. Their increased use by the United States, ambiguity and the clandestine policy surrounding this technology demonstrates that RPS's are topic of vital importance. While international law is not included in the scope of this work, U.S. RPV policy undoubtedly affects global policy pertaining to this tool of war.

Section one will provide a base for all future chapters by outlining a brief history of the U.S. RPV program, and terrorist organizations in Yemen and Pakistan, in addition to their growth or decline over time. This section is vital for producing an informed decision on how RPV's have directly impacted terrorism in these two states. Section two will review policy and procedures for RPV usage in Pakistan and Yemen. This will

include primary location, strike sanctioning, and any status of forces agreement (SOFA) or other type of formal understanding the United States might have with either Yemen or Pakistan. Section three will examine how RPV strikes have affected radicalization in these two states, including civilian and militia death ratios. This section will compare the current threat posed by terrorist cells in Yemen and Pakistan, compare that to the threat prior to RPV usage, and then use all of this information to extrapolate the future trajectory of security threats. The work will culminate with a section devoted to areas for future research, including policy. Additionally, the possibility of a null hypothesis would answer what might happen if RPV strikes suddenly ceased, or were replaced by kill/capture missions and how this would affect security threats in these regions. Lastly, a conclusion will tie together the entire body of work.

SECTION II: HISTORY

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DRONE

Remotely piloted vehicles have developed over time from ungainly, fragile, remote controlled surveillance tools, to one of the most highly advanced pieces of equipment, capable of delivering a swift death. The story began during WWII, when a top commander in what was then the U.S. Army Air Forces, General Henry “Hap” Arnold, developed an unprecedented new way to attack U-boat stations and other heavily fortified German positions. He turned old B-17 and B-24 bombers into remotely piloted aircraft and loaded them with explosives. Later, Arnold wrote in a memo to his staff, “If you can get mechanical machines to do this you are saving lives at the outset” and declared that “the next war may be fought by airplanes with no men in them at all”^{iv}. This prediction partially came true during the Vietnam War when the United States used remote controlled drones to carry out high-altitude photo reconnaissance missions^v. Their success encouraged research on the new technology. These early surveillance drones were far more accurate than the alternative, satellites, whose intelligence was limited by their orbit and cloud obstruction. As time went on, future missions for RPV’s included extensive use in the Balkan Wars, where they were useful in tracking the genocide of Bosnian Muslims, and then for tracking the new radical terrorist Osama bin Laden in the early 2000’s. It was around this time that the Pentagon and CIA began developing plans to arm the RPV so that an entire mission, from tracking, monitoring, to an eventual strike, could be carried out by a single vehicle.

It was the search for Osama bin Laden in early 2001 that provided the impetus for the project of arming the reconnaissance RQ-1Predator. Replicas of typical Afghani houses were built in the Nevada desert so that tests for the multimission MQ-1 Predator would include these circumstances. However, once the armed Predator had reached the end of its testing phase, both the Air Force and the CIA were reluctant to fly what they felt was an awkward, unproven weapon that was unique and morally ambiguous^{vi}. Jurisdictional arguments over who would fly the weaponized RPV continued until the project was finally shelved during a meeting of government officials held on September 4, 2001. Many critics look back on this period of time and argue that the equivocation over arming RPV's resulted in lost opportunities to killing Osama bin Laden and his key associates, possibly disrupting or even preventing the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Policy precedence for drones began when the Carter administration banned any involvement in assassination in Executive Order 12036. The Reagan administration later banned any assassination in EO 12333, which states that "No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination"^{vii}. These were later amended by the Clinton administration, which permitted 'lethal' counterterrorism actions against a list of named targets. However, it was made clear that assassination was only to be approved as a last resort if capture was not deemed "feasible." Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration further amended EO 12333 by removing the named list of targets as well as the "feasible" capture caveat^{viii}. It became apparent that assassination was

going to be policy during the War on Terror, and it was to be carried out by the United States Government at the President's discretion.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) are generally the organizations that carry out aerial targeted assassinations and signature strikes via RPV in Yemen and Pakistan. The CIA and JSOC are used rather than military units in order to offer plausible deniability; these agencies are less accountable under U.S. law and therefore can afford less transparency^{ix}. JSOC was created following a failed mission to rescue hostages held at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran as a result of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Pentagon recognized the need for a unified, fully capable, and highly qualified special operations team that would have its own aircraft, soldiers, and intelligence so that future similar missions might prove more successful. Thus, in 1980 JSOC was born in order to fulfill the need for the President to have access to a small private army for unconventional, clandestine missions. The CIA and JSOC have also been accompanied by private Blackwater (currently renamed XE Services) military forces to supplement CIA and Pentagon forces, particularly during the height of the Iraq war when governmental resources were thin^x. This amalgam of forces became the infrastructure for post 9/11 responses in Afghanistan as well.

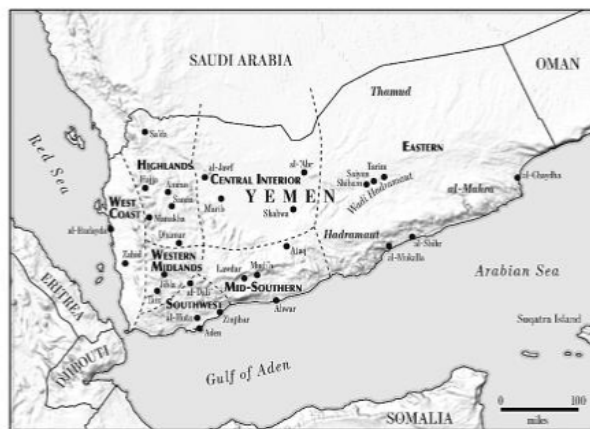
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

The Fund for Peace currently ranks Yemen as the 8th least stable state globally^{xi}. While this is the most Yemen has improved since 2007, according to the organization, it is clear that Yemen faces systemic challenges to improved stability which would reduce the number and growth of terrorist organizations. Although current tension between

former North and South Yemen is often the cause of regional destabilization and violence, Yemen's territorial unity has been the exception rather than the rule across centuries^{xii}. Yemen's internal conflict is almost entirely political. Frustration with a government that does not provide for its people is high within the populace. While Houthi insurgents in Northern Yemen are Shi'ia and AQAP militants are Sunni, their mutual disparity lies in political aspirations, not sectarian disagreements. Yemen also has no history of warlordism or clan warfare, nor are there linguistic or cultural disagreements^{xiii}. Although Yemen has a large coast, there is no standing water inland, virtually no infrastructure and, unlike other states on the Saudi peninsula, Yemen has very little oil to capitalize on. All of this has contributed to Yemen's extreme poverty. Yemen is one of the region's oldest cultures, home to the infamous Queen of Sheba and the fictional Scheherazade who narrated "One Thousand and One Nights". Finally, Yemen, including its large diaspora, is fiercely loyal.

Sociologically, Yemeni society today consists of a single segmentary lineage system, defined by anthropologists as a society with individual clans linked by common descent. In the case of Yemen this common decent originates from one of the main groups of Arabs, the Qahtan^{xiv}. There are seven regional groups, although there is considerable cultural mixing at the boundaries. The northwest highland region centered on the periphery of the flat mountain plain of Sana'a is surrounded by steep mountains in the south, east and west, and the Saudi Arabian border to the north. The tribal men in this region are often seen wearing a traditional curved dagger in their belts. In this high elevation, the state's supply of qat is grown, a leaf that, when chewed,

produces a mildly intoxicating effect. The west coast region is heavily influenced by African customs and traditions, particularly Eritrean and Ethiopian. The region boasts a large fishing industry as well as the historical coastal city of Mocha, where the drink received its namesake. The western midlands are dominated by mountains and valleys. It is where many of Yemen's factories are located and it has the largest agricultural industry in the state; it is therefore one of the wealthiest regions. The southwest lowlands is where the port city Aden is located, and although the city is often viewed as a stark contrast to the rest of the state, having a more metropolitan, liberal culture, the surrounding villages remain steeped in traditional values. The mid-southern region has remained close to its original tribal roots despite governmental shifts over time. It is where the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa are located and is, generally speaking, a resource-poor area. The central interior is referred to as al-Rub al-Khali, or the 'empty quarter'. It is believed in Islamic culture to be the region ruled by the famous Queen of Sheba mentioned in the Bible and Quran^{xv}. Lastly is the eastern region. The residents along the coast and inland in the wadi, or valley, represent the largest and most cohesive subnational group. They have a very distinct culture, tradition, and dialect specific to the Hadrami people. This is the region that Osama bin Laden's father was born and migrated from.



Seven geographic regions of Yemen's population

Figure 1^{xvi}

Theologically, Yemen is 65% Sunni, which includes al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Shafi'i Muslims, and 35% Zaydi Shi'ias^{xvii}. Zaydi Shi'ias are often referred to as "fiver" Shi'ia, named after the succession struggle in Iraq during the generation of the fifth Shi'ia imam in the early 8th Century^{xviii}. Zayd ibn Ali ibn Husayn's followers asserted that he should have been the rightful fifth imam. Shi'ia's from Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon are often referred to as "twelver" Shi'ias, and take their name from a belief in the mystical disappearance of the twelfth imam. "Twelver" Shi'ias have a conflicted relationship with Sunni's over the martyrdom of Imam Ali's son. These "twelver" Shi'ias dispute the claim of the Zaydi Shi'ias, who traveled to Yemen two centuries later^{xix}. The first Zaydi who arrived in Yemen was at the invite of al-Medina to arbitrate a tribal dispute in the city of Sa'ada. Although Zaydi's are often referred to as Shi'ia, they are not Shi'ia in the traditional sense, nor does their current qualm concern conversion or religious doctrine.

Yemen's initial north-south border delineation was drawn by cartographers and surveyors sent from the imperial capitals of London and Istanbul in the first decade of

the twentieth century^{xx}. However, neither the British nor Ottoman Empire's ever exercised uniform power beyond using strategic cities for sea ports. Prior to the 1960's, Yemen had a series of imamates that overlapped in time and space, which followed the tradition of a divided rule. This pattern was broken as the Soviet Union began to develop a sphere of influence over the South once the British had withdrawn in 1967. Northern Yemen, on the other hand, was dominated by two main highland tribes: the Hashid and Bakil, both of whom shared a staunch loyalty to the Zaydi imams who ruled since the late ninth century C.E. That was until a coup d'état was launched by those loyal to Gamal Abdel Nasser, second President of Egypt and strong proponent of what he called the United Arab Republic. What ensued was the North Yemen Civil War, with the Bakil and Hashid tribes, as well as Saudi Arabia, maintaining support for the Zaydi imamate while the Shafi'i Yemeni's and Egypt backed Socialist republican forces^{xxi}.

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (commonly referred to as South Yemen), being Marxist itself, enjoyed financial backing from the Soviet Union. South Yemen labored to unify lands that had previously consisted of more than twenty separate sultanates, emirates and shaykhdoms^{xxii}. To integrate each region peacefully with no internal divisions and simultaneously assert governmental control, South Yemen's earliest legislation banned the carrying of arms^{xxiii}. In addition, to weaken tribal allegiances, the South Yemeni government also made revenge killings punishable in state courts^{xxiv}. After eight long years of civil war, North Yemen was unable to establish this sort of crucial rule of law, and remained deeply ingrained in a tribal

society where tribal feuds and revenge killings were, and continue to be, commonplace. Tribespeople have been for the most part self-governing in the fact that they imposed their own laws and ran their own prisons in the highlands of North Yemen. North Yemen's President, Ali Abdullah Saleh (1978-1990), ran the state like a giant tribe thriving off of underhanded deals and playing rivals against each other. He often famously described his presidency as 'dancing on the heads of snakes'^{xxv}.

South Yemen, on the other hand, is largely composed of settled peasants with a hierarchical system of authority. Despite being supported by the Soviet Union, many of these peasants resented the new, abrupt and ruthless security regime. Hundreds of thousands fled to Saudi Arabia and North Yemen^{xxvi}, while others sought revenge against the Soviet military in Afghanistan during the 1980's. It was these South Yemeni people who would travel thousands of miles to jihad. What had begun as Soviet backing of the Communist government in Kabul had turned into an Arab struggle against invading atheists. South Yemenis would then return home once fighting had ended in 1989 to continue fighting the Yemeni communist government. This was Yemen's first taste of al Qaeda ideology. It proved to be very strong, as according to Osama bin Laden's former body guard, 95% of al Qaeda activists were either from Yemen or were ethnically Yemeni^{xxvii}.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, South Yemen also lost its main benefactor. The former President of North Yemen, Saleh, became the first President of a united Yemen in 1990. There had been speculation both internally and internationally over the eventual unification of the state for decades. However, the triumph of

accomplishing unification soon dissipated into chaos. In 1992, nearly one hundred assassinations or attempts were carried out against Southern politicians by either Northern highland tribes' members or formerly exiled South Yemenis^{xxviii}. In this environment of instability, Saleh chose to give support towards Southern Yemeni jihad fighters returning from Afghanistan who had their land taken from them during the transition to Socialism. Saleh's strategy was for these fighters, some of whom having connections with bin Laden, to eliminate any struggle against possible Socialist rivals^{xxix}. The President would use these former jihadists fighting in Afghanistan to beat back Southern secessionists, Northern Houthi rebels who supported the revival of the Zaydi Imamate, and any other problematic domestic elements Saleh faced^{xxx}. Not only was al Qaeda finding a safe haven in Yemen to construct training camps in the South and gain membership and sympathy, it was actively welcomed during the early years of unification^{xxxi}.

A decade after Yemen's unification and the end of the first Gulf War in October 2000, two men in a small boat pulled alongside the U.S.S. Cole and detonated five hundred pounds of C4 explosives, ripping through the destroyer and killing 17 sailors. The U.S. Navy ship had docked in Aden port to refuel during its mission of enforcing economic sanctions in Iraq that had been in place since the end of the Gulf War. Many residents of Aden knew that the blast had some connection to bin Laden, specifically a local military group called the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, who had joined bin Laden in Afghanistan's mujahedeen during the 1980's^{xxxii}. Yemenis were largely in favor of the attack, as the United States in Yemen at the time was associated with ongoing Israeli

violence against Palestinians, as well as the economic stranglehold placed on Iraq. Prior to the attack, President Saleh had stonewalled the United States' investigation of al Qaeda in Yemen; by this time, many members of the terrorist organization had intimate connections to the Yemeni government^{xxxiii}. Saleh even refused to acknowledge the bombing as an act of terrorism for the first few days following the attack, claiming that the blast had resulted from an internal explosion aboard the vessel^{xxxiv}.

RPV strikes in Yemen can be traced back to a meeting between Saleh and President Bush in November just after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In the meeting, the United States pledged Saleh millions of dollars in aid, helicopters, weapons, a hundred Special Forces trainers, and support for Yemen's intelligence and security forces^{xxxv}. In return, Saleh, whose al Qaeda associations had been made public, allowed the United States secret authority to fly armed RPV's in Yemen in order to target al Qaeda members seeking sanctuary inside the desert interior region of Marib^{xxxvi}. One year later in 2002, the Bush Administration authorized a Predator drone to be sent to Yemen where it would use a Hellfire missile to obliterate its target: Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, the mastermind of the U.S.S. Cole bombing, along with five of his companions^{xxxvii} including one American^{xxxviii}. While the CIA's operation to kill Harethi had the tacit approval of the Yemeni government, the strike itself had been carried out unilaterally by the United States^{xxxix}. Harethi's death was a major blow to al Qaeda in the region; he was Osama bin Laden's main contact in Yemen and had established al Qaeda's first training camps there^{xl}. Yemen, thusly, marked the first use of U.S. RPV's outside of the traditional theater of war following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

Culturally, Pakistan relies heavily upon the importance of kinship that is rooted in a sense of collective solidarity for interest and defense. A kinship group is inextricably bound with feelings of honor, prestige (or izzat), and shame^{xli}. A group that has been dishonored will reflect dramatically upon every aspect of the individuals' lives. Shame and honor are often upheld in kinship groups by preventing or punishing any act or behavior the group finds to be sexually illicit among the women of the group, but also through political and economic advancement, and public status of the group. The cultural system is so strong it dictates that a father will kill his daughter if she marries outside of her kinship group without permission. The strength of Pakistan's kinship networks is the foci of their loyalty, and has influenced the weakness of the state and government establishment. Once this is understood, infamous Pakistani corruption can actually be interpreted as the ancient value of loyalty towards family and kinship tribes. For instance, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is comprised of the Bhutto family and the Awami National Party (ANP) represents the Wali Khan family^{xlii}.

Pakistan boasts one of the oldest civilizations in the world, dating back at least 5,000 years. It was invaded over that time by the Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Arabs, Afghans, and Turks until the British folded the region that would become Pakistan into the British Raj in the 19th Century^{xliii}. The British had extended their rule as far north as they could in order to create a buffer zone for the encroaching Russian Imperial Army. However, they soon learned that the fiercely independent tribespeople of what they called the trans-Indus districts could not be governed the same as other protectorate's,

and therefore relied on indirect rule over the Pakistanis^{xliv}. Pakistan's northern border was created by the British in 1893 to demarcate a boundary between British India and Afghanistan. Pakistan's southern border was decided upon when the British removed themselves from the region in 1947. The partition was drawn up by the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress in order to create two states, one with the majority being Hindu's that would be India and the other with the majority being Muslim's^{xliv}. This latter state was named Pakistan; some argue that the name is an acronym for the people who lived there: Punjab, Afghani, and Kashmir; others claim that it is derived from combining the Urdu words pak which means 'pure' and stan which means 'home' or 'country'.

Immediately following independence, Pakistan faced major issues that threatened its stability. Tension with India on their eastern borders over Kashmir threatened to plunge India and Pakistan into war, and millions of Muslim refugees were flooding into Pakistan. To make matters worse, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, ruling as governor-general and Pakistan's first head of state, was terminally ill and would die within a year of assuming his position^{xlvi}. Prior to independence, President Eisenhower referred to the land as 'Jinnah's Pakistan' and described the man who almost single-handedly created the state as 'brilliant'^{xlvi}. His death caused many leading analysts to question the future an independent Pakistan following his death^{xlvi}. As a testament to their tempestuous genesis, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated in 1951, and the original capitol, Karachi, was eventually changed to the newly constructed Islamabad in 1960. During this time of internal instability, India and

Pakistan would engage in three wars over the disputed Kashmir territory, in 1947, 1965, and again in 1971, the last of which resulted in East Pakistan splitting off to form the sovereign state of Bangladesh.

Pakistani politics have also proven as a root to the states' divided society. Following Jinnah's death and Khan's assassination, Khwaja Nazimuddin, an East Pakistani who had been governor-general since Jinnah's death, became the new Prime Minister in 1951^{xlix}. However, he was forced to yield just two years later to Muhammad Ali Bogra in 1953. Bogra was subsequently replaced by Chaudhry Muhammad Ali in 1955, and General Iskandar Mirza became governor-general at that time as well. Pakistan drafted a new constitution under Chaudhry Muhammad Ali and was also declared an Islamic republic. Despite advancements, Prime Minister Ali remained in office just a year before he was succeeded by Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy. However, Suhrawardy's attempts to form an alliance between East and West Pakistani political forces was so controversial he was forced to resign. Dissatisfied with parliamentary democracy, governor-general Mirza proclaimed marshal law in 1958 and dissolved the National Assembly^l. General Muhammad Ayub Khan was named chief martial-law administrator and twenty days later, forced the President to resign so that he could assume the position himself. Ayub ruled Pakistan for over ten years. While he made drastic land reforms, imposed restrictions on polygamy, and reinforced the inheritance rights of women, feudal relationships over land ownership remained in the countryside.

Following the 1965 war with India, Pakistan badly needed economic and military aid from the United States. To end the conflict, the Soviet Union interceded to

mediate, resulting in the Tashkent Agreement which called for a cease fire between India and Pakistan. Unsatisfied with the Tashkent Agreement, resentful Pakistanis forced Ayub to resign in 1969 and Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto resigned as well. Ayub transitioned power to the chief of the Army, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, who once again declared martial law. Due to severe instability caused by Bengali succession in the 1970's, Yahya relinquished power back to Bhutto in 1971, and Bhutto gave diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh in 1974. Under Bhutto, Pakistan once again went through a series of reforms. Basic insurance companies, domestically owned banks, and schools and colleges were nationalized, and further land reforms were implemented to benefit tenants and middle-class farmers. These reforms ultimately earned Bhutto the enmity of capitalists and religious elements and a coup was eventually staged in 1977 by the Army Chief of Staff Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. Zia assumed Presidency in 1978 and established martial law and Sharia law in Pakistan which included maximum penalty for adultery, defamation, theft, and consumption of alcohol.

Just three years later, Pakistan, with the help of the United States and Saudi Arabia, joined Yemen to become embroiled in the Afghan war against the 'godless' Soviet military. Those Pakistanis who had once lived in the same borderless region as Afghans felt personally dishonored by the Soviet invaders. However, once the Soviets had been driven out of Afghanistan in the late 1980's, a power vacuum in Afghanistan left the state vulnerable and poverty stricken. Groups of students (talib is the singular, taliban is the plural Arabic word for student) amalgamated to try and create law and

order in Afghanistan. Not only did Pakistan's state run Inter-Service Intelligence agency funnel money to the Taliban, but the CIA as well^{li}. The ISI boldly exerted distributive control over CIA money and arms in Afghanistan, which the U.S. eventually consented to, helping the ISI to expand enormously during the 1980's and become a major political entity in Pakistan^{lii}. Eventually the Taliban took over Kabul, although their prejudices against other ethnic groups and women became immediately and painfully apparent. In this post-war chaos, nearly 5 million Afghani's, including members of the Taliban group, would cross over into Pakistan as refugees who brought with them droves of Kalashnikov's and drugs^{liii}. Following the end of the Gulf War in 1991, Al Qaeda and the Taliban, once labeled as freedom fighters, metastasized into a serious threat on the local and state level. Although the ISI had maintained a certain degree of control over these military groups, they began to lose control in 1997 when Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar handed over all training camps for foreigners in Afghanistan to Osama bin Laden^{liv}. Once the Soviets withdrew in 1989, those militant groups such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, founded in 1984, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, founded in 1982 to jihad in Afghanistan, returned and redirected their efforts towards the conflict over Kashmir.

After the 1988 general elections, Benazir Bhutto, daughter of former Prime Minister Bhutto, became Prime Minister and the first woman to head a modern Islamic state. Just two years later in 1990, President Ishaq Khan dismissed Bhutto's government, charging misconduct. Nawaz Sharif assumed the position of Prime Minister, however Bhutto was re-elected in 1993. In 1996, Bhutto was once again

dismissed under charges of corruption, she went into exile, and an interim Prime Minister was appointed. A military coup in 2000 resulted in General Pervez Musharraf assuming Presidency in 2001. Musharraf's Presidency was largely volatile. He survived four assassination attempts in five years, and deep bitterness was instilled among Pakistanis when Musharraf ordered government troops to raid Islamabad's Red Mosque in 2007, killing 70 Islamic militants^{lv}. In 2006, Benazir Bhutto returned in order to seek reelection as Prime Minister but was assassinated in 2007, killed along with twenty others, in Rawalpindi during a campaign rally. These incidents led to Musharraf's resignation on the eve of his impending impeachment. A coalition government resulted in Nawaz Sharif becoming Prime Minister and Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's widower, became President. Zardari incidentally had spent eleven years in jail on corruption charges. Zardari did not run for reelection in 2013, allowing the Presidency to pass to Mamnoon Hussain.

THE FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS OF PAKISTAN

Over time, a buffer area developed known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) within Pakistan along its border with Afghanistan. These tribal areas act almost as a separate entity to Pakistan. One tribesman explained his national identity following Pakistan's split from Bangladesh: "I have been a Pashtun for six thousand years, a Muslim for thirteen hundred years, and a Pakistani for twenty-five"^{lvi}. Tribal identity in the FATA, a segmentary lineage system on the periphery of a state and its sovereign government, is the most dominant force. They have their own code of honor, which varies by tribe, with the paramount principle being the law of hospitality to

guests, be they friend or enemy. Another strong force is the tribal code, called Pukhtunwali meaning 'way of the Pukhtun', is that of revenge. "When serious wrongs do occur – such as murder, theft, or rape – revenge is taken to correct the wrong and restore honor"^{lvii}. Revenge and counter-revenge between clans has been known to last for generations.

Primary strike locations for U.S. RPV's were centralized in the FATA region, with the first occurrence recorded in June 2004, targeting local Taliban commander Nek Mohammad, who died soon after the strike from his wounds^{lviii}. However, further strikes in Pakistan were postponed thereafter until 2005 when the CIA, CENTCOM (Central Command), and the Pentagon came to the realization that Pakistan was presenting more of a security threat than Afghanistan. U.S. intelligence pointed to Ayman al Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second in command, also located in the FATA, to be among other top terrorist targets. Because there were no agreements between the United States and Pakistan, there was no jurisdiction for military forces to enter the state for any reason, grounding even RPV strikes. All of this changed when, in October of 2005, Pakistan suffered a massive 7.6 magnitude earthquake in which millions of Pakistanis were displaced from the damage. JSOC and CIA forces were able to take advantage of the disorder by implanting operatives in order to cultivate informant rings and collect information on al Qaeda as part of Operation Cannonball, laying down groundwork for future RPV usage^{lix}.



Figure 2^{lx}

It was during this time in late 2005 and going into 2006 that RPV's became the primary weapon for the U.S. in Pakistan. Although even well into 2006, the Pakistani government, unwilling to disclose to its people the U.S. RPV campaign, took full responsibility for each strike by claiming the strikes were Pakistani bombers^{lxi}. One of President Bush's final decisions regarding the War on Terror was to "turn up pressure on extremists" using the Predator RPV in 2008^{lxii}. CIA director (DCIA) Michael Hayden and Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Mike McConnell expressed their concern with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, prior to his resignation, over a possible merger between al Qaeda and Pashtun extremists. This threat along with the threat Musharraf felt from Taliban members convinced the President to agree to an expansion of the parameters for RPV strikes. The new agreement allowed the CIA virtually unrestricted authority to conduct strikes in the border FATA region^{lxiii}. Then, in 2009, the United States authorized a higher rate of use for the RPS as an extension of President Obama's decision to deploy additional troops to Afghanistan.

SECTION III: U.S. POLICY

There is some discrepancy over policy surrounding particularly the oversight of RPV strikes. In broad, general terms, the CIA is expected to report to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees on their activities, while the JSOC reports to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. There has been some speculation by policy analysts that the Director of the CIA is responsible for signing off on any RPV strikes conducted by the CIA itself^{lxiv}. Some sources have claimed that the CIA has all the necessary approvals within its counterterror center to fire missiles within Pakistan when an al Qaeda target is spotted; thus the CT center does not necessarily require approval from the White House, Pakistani authorities, or even the CIA director to initiate a strike in this instance^{lxv}.

In February 2013, the confidential ‘white papers’ were obtained by media sources which detail the conditions for an RPV strike carried out by the CIA against senior operational leaders of al Qaeda or an associated force. The memo outlined three specific requirements that must be met for a strike to be judged lawful. Firstly, the target must be considered an imminent threat. However, this definition is very expansive, as a threat can be considered imminent even if it does not have “evidence that a specific attack on U.S. persons and interests will take place in the immediate future”^{lxvi}. The phrase ‘imminent attack’ must be used in order to comply with national and international law. National law sanctions an attack on an imminent threat through the Authorization for the Use of Military Force passed by Congress on September 14, 2001. The Joint Resolution allows for the use of “all necessary and appropriate force

against those nations, organizations, or persons he (the President) determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons”^{lxvii}. In terms of international law, targeting an imminent threat would be sanctioned under the United Nations Charter 51 which accepts that a sovereign state has the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense^{lxviii}. The second criteria that must be met for a strike is that the capture of the target must be infeasible. This is understood to mean that “undue risk to U.S. personnel conducting a potential capture operation” cannot take place^{lxix}. Lastly, strikes must be in accordance with the fundamental law-of-war principles and does not violate principles of necessity, distinction, proportionality and humanity (i.e. the avoidance of unnecessary suffering)^{lxx}. Whether or not these same criteria apply to JSOC forces is unknown.

Within the United States Air Force, which conducts RPV strikes in the theater of war, there are publicized and non-publicized resources to ascertain the amount of criteria that must be met before a strike can take place. The Joint Fires and Targeting Handbook, a public document published by the Joint Forces Command, lists general rules for any strike carried out by any military weapons system. Sources have described criteria specific to RPS’s to include: reliability of intelligence that identified the target (in some cases, verification from two independent sources), and the number of and status of other people in the area. “The less reliable the information and the greater the potential collateral damage, the more people review the information and the higher the rank of those in the military who must approve the strike – all the way up to

the Commander in Chief.”^{lxxi} In cases where innocents have been killed as collateral damage, these individual strikes are reexamined. While this is how the Air Force conducts its RPV strikes, it is possible that the CIA and Pentagon also employ these same guidelines.

A major development in RPV policy occurred in 2008 as part of the relaxation of rules under which the CIA could launch a strike. This development has commonly been referred to as ‘signature strikes’ because all that was required to strike was for the target to match a ‘signature’ type of vehicle or safe house typical to al Qaeda^{lxxii}. The Defense Department has opted to refer to these types of strikes as terrorist-attack-disruption-strikes (TADS)^{lxxiii}. The new policy removed the standard of proof needed before an RPV could strike. Al Qaeda is structurally not a top heavy organization^{lxxiv}; these types of strikes aiming at large convoys or houses are meant to quickly decimate low ranking members^{lxxv}. The increase in RPV strikes could be attributed to President Obama’s Executive Order to close the Guantanamo Detention Facility early in his presidency^{lxxvi}. Although the Guantanamo Detention Facility continues to be fully operational, targeting terrorist suspects and killing them in the field has lowered the number of detainees and enabled the process of closing the facility.

In September, 2012, President Obama addressed drone strikes specifically in his speech to the National Defense University. The President announced that “By the end of 2014...the progress we’ve made against core al Qaeda will reduce the need for unmanned strikes” and that “beyond the Afghan theater, we only target al Qaeda and its associated forces. And even then, the use of drones is heavily constrained.” He

explained that “America does not take strikes when we have the ability to capture individual terrorists,” and that “America cannot take strikes wherever we choose; our actions are bound by consultations with partners, and respect for state sovereignty.” The President went on to say that “America does not take strikes to punish individuals; we act against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the American people, and when there are no other governments capable of effectively addressing the threat.” The last caveat President Obama mentioned with respect to drones was that “before any strike is taken, there must be a near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured”^{lxxvii}.

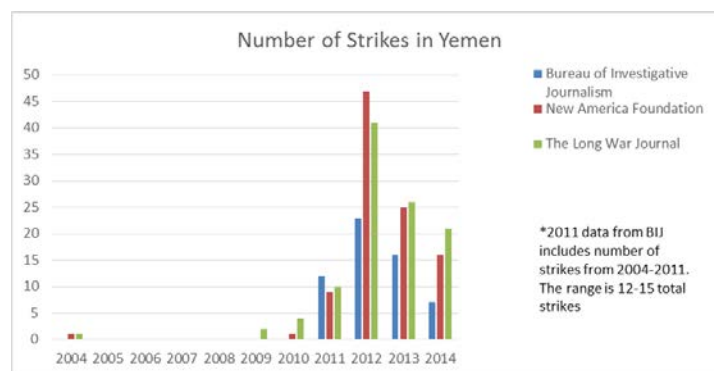


Figure 3



Figure 4

However, beginning in 2013, a chorus of international and domestic outcry over the legality of RPV strikes resulted in a steady decline of their use in Pakistan and Yemen. As reports over RPV usage and casualty numbers began to surface, it was evident that policy must conform in some degree to the public. Any subclass on drones is not mentioned in weapon treaties or any other legal instrument of international or humanitarian law. Currently, international lawmakers still struggle over whether armed RPV's should have their own unique set of regulations to be accountable to. The United Nations has mandated that there is 'no need' to create new laws when deploying RPV's for extraterritorial counter-terrorism operations of any state^{lxxviii}. Critics of the U.S. armed aerial assassination campaign, from law professors and academic experts to Senators, have pointed out flaws in the White Papers. These include the elastic and ambiguous use of the word 'imminent' in the document, as well as the fact that RPV strikes under the jurisdiction of JSOC and CIA are classified and the rules governing them are classified.

SECTION IV: YEMEN

RPV POLICY AND USAGE

In Yemen, some RPV strikes are conducted by the CIA whereas others are managed by the Department of Defense, specifically the JSOC. These RPV's have been known to fly out of Air Bases located in the Seychelles, Djibouti, and southern Ethiopia^{lxxix}. The United States does not necessarily have military installations at each of these locations, with the exception of Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti.

Prior to the signature strike policy, RPV's in Yemen were used solely for strategic assassinations, including Harethi, whom the U.S. government had originally requested to be arrested by the Yemeni government. It was only when the Yemeni government failed to detain Harethi that the CIA deployed an armed RPV to assassinate the target^{lxxx}. Since Bush met with Saleh in 2001, the United States had protected Saleh's regime. However, once the threat Harethi had posed was eliminated, al Qaeda in Yemen decreased significantly along with U.S. aid. The announcement was made in the fall of 2005 by the United States and the World Bank that aid would be cut nearly in half due to the fact that democracy in Yemen had stalled and that corruption was still rampant within the government. Saleh was baffled, particularly by the United States' actions. Since 2001, he had done everything the United States had asked. The list of names the CIA had given him had all been taken care of, Harethi had been killed, other al Qaeda operatives had been jailed, and there hadn't been an al Qaeda attack in Yemen for three years^{lxxxi}.

Al Qaeda slowly began to resurrect itself as Saleh's Presidency began to lose popularity in Yemen. However, it wasn't until the Arab Spring reached Yemen in 2011 that the state began to crumble and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) began to assert itself as a dominant threat. U.S. supported units were pulled back to Sana'a for defense of Saleh and his unpopular regime. AQAP began controlling large swaths of land, particularly in the Abyan Province, in the uncontrolled chaos and were marching on Aden. To end the conflict, in May the United Nations and the United States tried to broker a deal with Saleh which would guarantee that he would not be prosecuted for any crimes he might have committed during his presidency^{lxxxii}. Saleh refused the deal, which sparked a two week street war in Sana'a that culminated when a bomb ripped through the mosque Saleh was praying at within the presidential palace^{lxxxiii}, leaving him with severe burns on 70% of his body^{lxxxiv}.

President Obama had been explicit in his desires for the United States in Yemen: they were not to get involved in domestic conflict, they would not implement signature strikes, and there would be no Yemen campaign^{lxxxv}. Rather, the U.S. President insisted on continuing to implement calculated, surgical strikes against AQAP's top leaders. Homeland Security Advisor John Brennan along with the head of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) General James Mattis produced a list of human targets for the policy. In late 2011, the Obama administration finally decided to pull out nearly all of the U.S. military personnel in Yemen, including those who had been stationed there to train Yemen's counterterrorism forces. It was becoming evident that Ali Abdullah Saleh was no longer a profitable alliance. Yet, the United States did not want to risk ground

troops. With Saleh's medical absence, President Obama approved of two surgical strikes, one targeted the American born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, the other was against Egyptian AQAP member Ibrahim al-Banna. A fleet of armed drones successfully killed Awlaki along with three other men. Two weeks later, the strike for Banna was approved by President Obama. Two Hellfire missiles were deployed and hit a group of men huddled around a campfire late at night on the outskirts of a town in the southern governorate of Shabwa. Rather than killing Banna, the missiles had hit a group of teenagers, including Awlaki's 16 year old American son Abd al-Rahman, who were having dinner^{lxxxvi}.

Following the strikes, protests continued to rage across Yemen while AQAP gained even more territory in Abyan and Shabwa until Saleh returned from his hospitalization and finally accepted the terms for his resignation. His long serving vice-President Abd Rabu Mansur Hadi replaced him as President of Yemen in February 2012. Hadi understood the opposition that faced him as President, and that he required staunch U.S. and international backing to remain President and survive. In exchange for U.S. support and a promise to make combating al Qaeda his top priority, Hadi allowed the U.S. unfettered access to targets in Yemen^{lxxxvii}. In response, President Obama approved the use of signature RPV strikes in Yemen. The coastal cities of Ja'ar and Zinjibar in the Abyan province that had been overtaken by Ansar al-Sharia were retaken by Yemeni government military forces in June 2012^{lxxxviii}. This was with the help of fourteen U.S. RPV strikes in the Abyan and Shabwa provinces over the course of two

days^{lxxxix}. Since signature strikes have been incorporated as part of RPS policy in Yemen, their volume has increased significantly as detailed in Figure 3.

IMPACT ON RADICALIZATION

In 2002, following the RPV strike that killed Harethi, Saleh was already aware that his cooperation with the United States had thus far filled his prisons and alienated him with the tribal shaykhs. His solution was to implement an al Qaeda rehabilitation program within the prisons. Saleh put a young Yemeni judge in charge named Mohammed Hamdi al-Ahdal, who was famous for sentencing two Muslims to death for murdering a Jew. This violated unwritten legal precedents and incited outrage at the time; Hamdi argued that his sentence had been rooted in the Quran, the Sunnah, and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad himself^{xc}. For the next three years, Hamdi, using nothing but the Yemeni constitution and the Quran, worked tirelessly with hundreds of al Qaeda prisoners to convince them that the teachings of bin Laden were not in agreement with their Holy Book. Slowly, prisoners were graduated from the program and allowed back into society. Al Qaeda continued to remain dormant in Yemen during the course of Hamdi's rehabilitation program. "There was an interlude of a little over two years in which it appeared as though al-Qaeda had largely been defeated in Yemen," Princeton University professor Gregory Johnsen, a leading U.S. expert on Yemen, recalled to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee^{xc}.

During this period of time, between 2002 and 2006, the Bush administration had redirected its focus on Yemen to that of the Iraq War and Saleh was preoccupied with Houthi uprisings in the North. When an article was published in 2005 alleging that

three of Hamdi's graduates had carried out suicide attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq, the United States, wary of the program from the start, pressured Saleh into ending the program^{xcii}. Just one month later, Nasir al-Wihayshi, bin Laden's secretary and the future head of AQAP, and his fellow al Qaeda inmates began digging out of their tiny, overcrowded cell in Sana'a. By February 3, 2006, the group of men had dug their way out of the prison and emerged inside a women's bathroom in a mosque 50 yards away^{xciii}. The prison had been Yemen's version of a maximum security fortress, with regular cell checks^{xciv}. Twenty three prisoners escaped that day, two of whom were Jamal al-Badawi and Jabir al-Banna, listed on the FBI's most wanted list. This was the turning point for al Qaeda to begin rebuilding again.

Under Wihayshi's leadership, al Qaeda's branch in Yemen would be methodically restructured and manned to sustain more ambitious new operations. Harethi's version of al Qaeda was weak, unorganized, and not sustainable; it wasn't surprising that his branch of the terrorist organization had died with him. Although had spent nearly a decade away with bin Laden in Afghanistan, he was originally from Yemen and still understood the labyrinth of Yemeni society. He traveled across the state and recruited locally in small towns. With elections in Yemen approaching, Saleh revealed little concern over the prison break, and the United States continued to treat Yemen as a secondary priority. Five months after the prison break, the United States launched a major expansion for Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti from eighty eight acres to nearly five hundred with 1,500 personnel and served as a major hub for CIA and JSOC forces^{xcv}. In spite of this, Wihayshi had written up a list of names for assassination that focused on

two groups of Yemeni military officers: those who tortured al Qaeda members and those who worked closely with the U.S. Included in the list was Ali Mahmud Qasaylah, whom they believed was the contact responsible for the RPV strike on Harethi. The assassination occurred just outside of the city of Marib, where the strike had taken place^{xcvi}.

Al Qaeda in Yemen continued to gain momentum. In the spring of 2006 following the prison break, a string of bombings occurred at oil and gas facilities in Marib and Hadramout^{xcvii}. In 2007, a top al Qaeda operative in Yemen named Qasim al Raymi who had had been an instructor at an al Qaeda training camp and was one of the escaped prisoners^{xcviii}, released an audio tape. In the tape, Raymi announced Wihayshi as Yemen's al Qaeda emir and warned against the dangers of negotiating with Saleh's government^{xcix}. Al Qaeda then released the first issue of a bi-monthly journal Sada al-Malahim, roughly translated as "The Echo of Battles," on the internet in January, 2008^c. Small attacks targeting tourists began in 2007 with eight Spanish tourists killed in 2007 in Ma'rib, two Belgian tourists killed in 2008 in Hadramout, and then four South Korean tourists killed the following year in 2009 in Sana'a^{ci}. These numbers do not include the groups' Yemeni tourist guides.

On September 17, 2008 al Qaeda jihadists staged their most dramatic attack against the United States since the U.S.S. Cole bombing. Following three failed attempts and the second attack in six months, half a dozen suicide bombers drove two police cars through the outer ring of the U.S. Embassy compound's reinforced perimeter defenses and detonated the explosives strapped to their bodies^{cii}. Although no American's were

harmed, four civilians and six security guards, nine Yemenis and one Indian, were killed. Notable failed plots include the attempted assassination of visiting South Korean diplomats in 2009, and the failed attempted assassination of a member of the Saudi royal family, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who also happened to hold the position of chief of counterterrorism in Saudi Arabia. The infamous Christmas 2009 incident began when a Nigerian-Yemeni man named Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab traveled to Yemen with the intention of forming connections with al Qaeda. He then boarded a plane bound for Africa, then Amsterdam, Holland and on to Detroit with the intent to detonate a bomb concealed in his underwear. The bomb failed to detonate, and Abdulmutallab was apprehended, tried and sentenced to life in prison^{ciii}. In 2010, highly sophisticated explosives disguised as 26 boxes of printer ink cartridges were hidden in two Qatar Airways passenger flights. The planes landed in Dubai, and were in route to FedEx and UPS airplanes that would transport the boxes to Chicago when they were discovered^{civ}. It was in 2009 that al Qaeda decided to merge together in the region and rebranded themselves as something far more ambitious: al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Yet despite this activity, the United States was slow to resort to armed RPV attacks as they had been doing in Pakistan. In 2002, the strike against Harethi was the first followed by a seven year hiatus in which the U.S. opted for other types of weapons platforms, including cruise missiles launched off of Naval vessels^{cv}. Four separate strikes occurred in 2009^{cvi}, and while some sources claim that there were as many as 27 possible strikes in 2010^{cvi}, others assure that the U.S. RPV campaign entered into

another lull. In 2011, chaos continued to erupt when President Saleh stepped down from office. A confirmed total of 16 strikes were conducted as a result, and a possible six suspected strikes^{cviii}, with ten taking place in Abyan Province and the remaining six touching down in Shabwa Province, both located in the South^{cix}. These numbers skyrocketed as AQAP continued to grow. Tribal leaders, who could have been vital in suppressing al Qaeda had a neutral view of the organization. If they felt threatened, their tribe would fight al Qaeda, however, the relationship for some tribes was symbiotic.

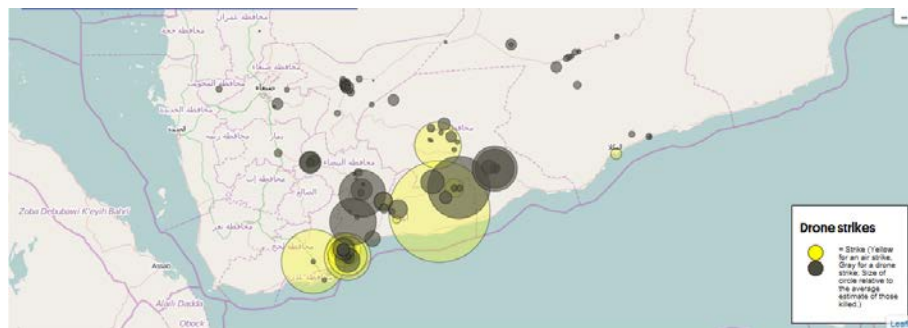


Figure 5^{cx}

In 2011, when al Qaeda began taking control over large swaths of land in the South, they announced their strategy. “Today we control Ja’ar...the largest problem that we face here is the lack of public services such as sewage and water, and we are trying to find solutions”. The speaker, Adil al-Abab, explained that al Qaeda no longer wanted to be the nihilistic terrorist organization portrayed in the media, and acknowledged mistakes the organization had made in the past and that they would henceforth introduce themselves to new cities as Ansar al Sharia, translated as Supporters of Sharia (law)^{cx}. Their ultimate goal was to overthrow the government which had thus far not been providing for its people and replace it with a government that would not

only do that, but also adhere to strict Sharia law. “Why should we fight them? Why?” Ali Abdullah Abdulsalam, a tribal leader from Shabwa, “If my government built schools, hospitals, and roads and met basic needs, I would be loyal to my government and protect it. So far, we don’t have basic services such as electricity and water pumps. Why should we fight al Qaeda?” he asked again^{cxii}.

While these militants were able to bring with them some sort of progress, including repairing roads, restoring electricity, and distributing food, they also introduced Sharia courts. These courts introduced brutal tactics as part of ‘hudud’, a fixed category of punishments for specific crimes that includes limb amputation and public flogging. Ansar al Sharia publicly beheaded two men in Ja’ar they claimed had provided information to the United States to conduct RPV strikes^{cxiii}. AQAP under the pseudonym Ansar al Sharia has also been known to crucify people who have been connected with selling information to the U.S.^{cxiv} While AQAP leader Wihayshi does have a great deal of operational independence, al Qaeda’s current leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has been known to assert pressure on Wihayshi to conduct terrorist strikes, just as Osama bin Laden was known to do to his affiliates^{cxv}. However, the actual plot is formulated by AQAP members, as any specific information relayed between Yemen and Pakistan could be easily intercepted. One such plot was another attempted airliner bombing which was meant to target a high-profile American. The plot was suspected to be revenge for two Yemeni members of AQAP who had been killed by an RPV strike the day prior. However, the individual who was to carry out the bombing was in fact an undercover informer allied with Saudi intelligence and the CIA^{cxvi}.

The following year in 2012, the number of RPV strikes skyrocketed to the highest amount to date. A confirmed 33 strikes in Yemen were conducted, with the possibility of an additional 78, depending upon the source. As the RPV strikes increased as well as the number of tactical successes, including the killing of Harethi and Awlaki, so did AQAP's numbers. In 2009 when AQAP officially formed, the organization had an estimated two to three hundred members^{cxvii}. In 2013, the U.S. State Department estimated that AQAP had grown to nearly one thousand members^{cxviii}. Overall, the CIA and JSOC have carried out seventy-nine RPV strikes in Yemen during the Obama administration and one during the Bush administration. Conservative estimates average at 386 enemy and 84 civilian casualties, putting the total number killed between 630 and 876 as of August 13, 2013^{cxix}. In 2014, there has been an additional six to eight confirmed RPV strikes and thirteen more possible strikes^{cxx}.

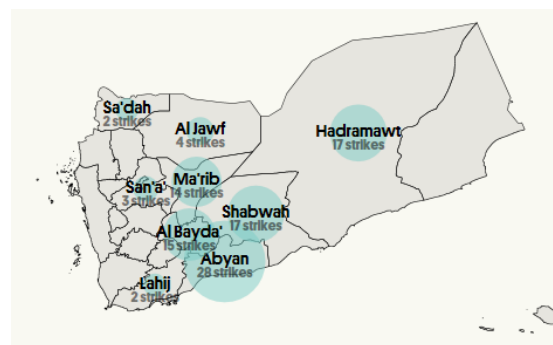


Figure 6^{cxxi}

Number of strikes per region in Yemen

Casualties in Yemen range dramatically dependent upon the source and what the source considered to be a militant versus a civilian. Because Yemen is so remote and hazardous for both local and foreign journalists and reporters, accurate numbers are extremely difficult to determine. According to The Long War Journal, 41 civilians were

killed as a result of U.S. RPV strikes in 2009, the highest number to date, with a total of 95 civilians and 492 members of AQAP being killed^{cxxii}. However, other sources claim different numbers. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, for instance, accounts for 36-39 civilians killed in 2011, the highest number per year the organization claims, with 87 civilians killed thus far and 573 militants killed overall^{cxxiii}. Many officials have speculated that the exponential increase of Yemen's radicalization is due to the porous sovereignty Yemen experiences when it comes to US strikes as well as the number of civilian casualties. The United States has never admitted to using RPV's in Yemen^{cxxiv} and has therefore never apologized to the victims' families; they have referred to any actions outside the theater of war as simply part of ongoing counterterrorism efforts^{cxxv}. Emile Nakhleh, a former senior CIA officer was quoted explaining that "we might target radicals and potential radicals, but unfortunately...other things and other people are being destroyed or killed. So, in the long run, it is not necessarily going to help." He went on to say that "these operations might be successful in specific cases, but I don't think they necessarily contribute to deradicalization of certain segments of those societies"^{cxxvi}.

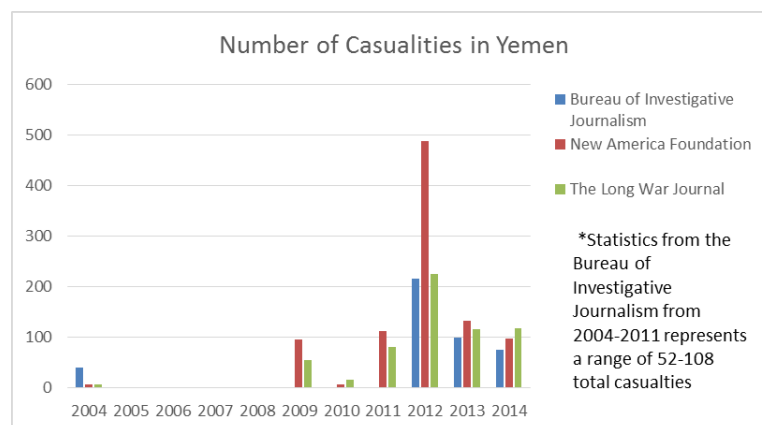


Figure 7

According to the Global Terrorism Database, terrorist attacks in Yemen remained relatively low until 2008^{cxxvii}. These numbers align with when al Qaeda in Yemen began conducting organized, systematic attacks following the 2006 prison break. In 2001, seven terrorist attacks were reported, carried out by Yemenis in larger cities or in smaller surrounding towns. In subsequent years, there were seven attacks in 2002; seven in 2003; no attacks were recorded in 2004, the year the United States began RPV strikes in the state; seven more attacks in 2005; finally, five attacks in 2006 and seven attacks in 2007. In 2008, these numbers changed dramatically with 22 strikes that year alone. Despite RPV strikes, they continued to rise exponentially until the last year the database recorded, with over 400 attacks in 2013. Main perpetrators were largely AQAP and Houthi rebels, with the minority of attacks being carried out by Southern secessionist movements.

In a move that further jeopardized Yemen's fragile stability, Houthi rebels began an assault on Sana'a September 21, 2014 and seized government buildings, state media facilities and military bases. In response, military units either broke apart, or sided with rebels. The Houthi rebels, representing the Ansarullah political party, advanced swiftly upon the capitol, creating a decisive schism within the city. Police protecting the building housing the Interior Ministry from surrounding Houthi militants were ordered to cooperate with the rebels "in consolidating security and stability"^{cxxviii}. The ministry went as far as to call the Houthi's "friends of the policy in the service of the general interests of the homeland"^{cxxix}. On the other hand, Brigadier General Ali Mohsin al-Ahmar along with military units considered loyal to him, provided a strong defense for

the city. General Ahmar is a member of a powerful Yemeni tribe who is associated with the Sunni Islamist party Islah, the main political rival to the Houthi's Ansarullah party.

However, by nightfall on the 21st, even General Ahmar's First Armored Division had been overtaken by the rebels, and the Generals' whereabouts remain unknown. Prime Minister Mohammed Salem Basindwa, also linked to the Islah party, resigned during the fighting over his "concern to pave the way for any agreement reached between the brother leaders of Ansarullah and brother Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi"^{cxxx}. President Hadi announced that the rebels had agreed to an immediate cease-fire and the formation of a new, technocratic national government which would include not only the Ansarullah party, but the Southern secessionist Herak movement as well as the Islah party^{cxxxi}. Due to the ease with which the Houthi's were able to capture the city, many have speculated that the group might have colluded with the Shiite Iranian government, or possibly even Hadi, in order that the group might eliminate figures the President views as a threat^{cxxxii}. The successful government take over threatens renewed violence between Houthi's and AQAP. In a move to appease the Houthi's, the United Nations brokered a peace deal between President Hadi and the rebels, Hadi appointed former UN envoy Khaled Bahah as Yemen's new Prime Minister^{cxxxiii}. Although the Houthi's approve of the choice, they refuse to leave Sana'a, which is completely under their control, until the new government is formed. Despite this major improvement, clashes between AQAP and Houthi's continue. On October 9, 2014, suicide bombers linked to AQAP killed at least 67 people in two separate attacks in eastern Yemen, and 18 Houthi's were killed by the terrorist organization on October

20th^{cxxxiv}. AQAP killed at least 33 others that same day during their seizure of the city al
Odayn^{cxxxv}.

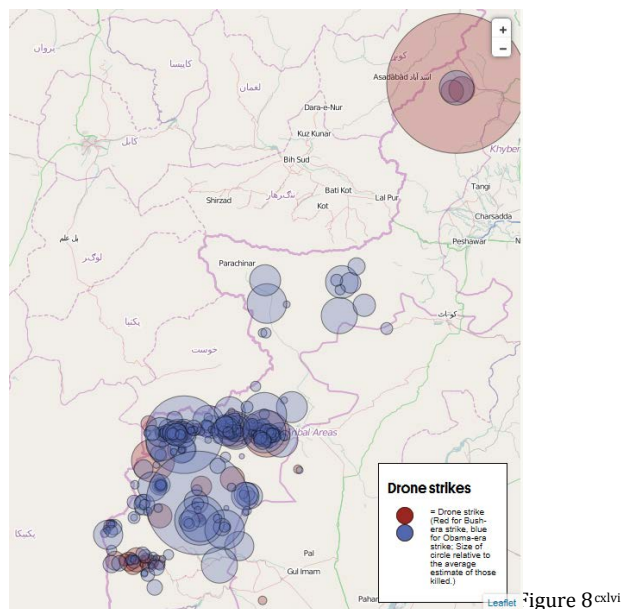
SECTION V: PAKISTAN

RPV POLICY AND USAGE

In Pakistan, all RPV strikes are conducted by the CIA^{cxv}. Originally, the CIA and JSOC^{cxvi} flew RPV's out of Shamsi Air Field located in the Washuk District of Baluchistan^{cxvii}. JSOC and contracted Blackwater employees would cull intelligence and create a strike list for JSOC and CIA RPV's^{cxviii}. Sometime between 2004 and 2013, JSOC forces were no longer tasked with RPV missions in Pakistan. Although many witnesses claimed to have seen a 'spy drone' at the scene of the initial RPV strike in Pakistan which killed Nek Muhammad, Pakistani officials vehemently denied CIA involvement, claiming that it was in fact Pakistani forces had carried out the attack^{cxix}. Emboldened by their success, more strikes were authorized in 2005, including the killing of Haitham al Yemeni in May in North Waziristan, which was flat out denied by the Pakistani Information Minister. Another strike in December killed Abu Hamza Rabia along with four 'accomplices', also in North Waziristan, and also denied by Pakistani officials. When pieces of a Hellfire missile were found at the target site by local villagers, a Pakistani journalist working for PBS tried to cover the story. During his investigation, he was abducted by Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence agency (ISI) and executed.

While Pakistanis were beginning to understand the extent of U.S. involvement in the eradication of al Qaeda and Taliban members, the five^{cxli} to seven^{cxlii} reported civilians killed in the three strikes that took place in 2005 caused little disturbance among the general populace. The subsequent strike, however, proved less than

successful. On January 13, 2006, three buildings were hit by ten Hellfire missiles in the village of Damadola in the Bajaur Agency of the FATA killing eighteen civilians including five women and five children^{cxliii}. The intended target was Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second in command. One survivor was quoted saying "my entire family was killed, and I don't know whom I should blame for it"^{cxliv}. As the number of strikes and the number of civilian casualties continued to grow exponentially, the more rage Pakistanis felt over their infringed sovereignty and the more difficult it became for the United States to deny involvement. In a testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee three months after Robert Gates succeeded Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense, Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, director for the Joint Staff, asserted that the United States had the authority to strike "against those demonstrating a hostile act" in Pakistan^{cxlv}. Lt. General Lute specified that if enemy forces crossed the border from Afghanistan to Pakistan, that U.S. military commanders had full authority to engage, either with a kill/capture approach or through an RPV strike.



Somewhere between 117 and 128 RPV strikes took place in 2010, according to The Long War Journal and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism respectively, the highest number conducted in any state to date. However, the following year the number dipped down to around sixty-four to seventy-five strikes. The reason for this sharp decline of their use in Pakistan is often attributed to three incidents. First, on March 17, 2011, an RPV strike killed between twenty-six and forty-four people in Datta Khel in North Waziristan, killing numerous civilians^{cxlvii}. Secondly was the SEAL team raid in May, 2011 in Abbottabad which killed bin Laden, outraging the Pakistanis over their infringed sovereignty. Thirdly was what has come to be called the ‘Salala incident’ in November, 2011, in which a joint U.S.-Afghan force, believing they were being fired upon by Taliban members, called in NATO air support. One AC-130 and at least one F-15 fighter opened fire on the group, which turned out to be members of the Pakistani Army; the friendly fire resulted in 24 Pakistani soldiers killed^{cxlviii}. Since December, 2011, all armed RPV’s with targets in Pakistan have been flown out of Afghanistan. By 2011, the United States no longer adhered to previously agreed upon parameters regarding how many RPV’s were allowed in Pakistan at one time and where they would be firing. The Pakistani government refused U.S. and NATO access to the Shamsi flight line in December, 2011, forcing the United States to move their operations to a newly created base in Jalalabad, Afghanistan^{cxlix}. These events led to a nearly two month lull in strikes, a stark difference compared to when RPV’s would take off almost hourly from Shamsi Airfield^{cl}.

Aside from scattered and infrequent periods of inactivity, the RPV campaign in Pakistan has been relatively steady. The longest lull in strikes since 2006 occurred recently following a strike on December 25, 2013 which killed three to four people near Miranshah, the capital of North Waziristan. The strike marked the beginning of a six month hiatus for U.S. RPV strikes in Pakistan. This coincided with peace talks between the Pakistani government and Pakistan's Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP). The Pakistani government requested that the CIA sharply curtail RPV strikes to allow for the peace talks to proceed after several failed attempts. However, the CIA reportedly informed Islamabad that the agency would still pursue senior targets or carry out strikes if they felt an attack was imminent^{cli}. The hiatus was ended June 11, 2014 when an RPV strike killed 16, including four Uzbeks who were thought to be linked to an al Qaeda-allied movement in Uzbekistan^{clii}.

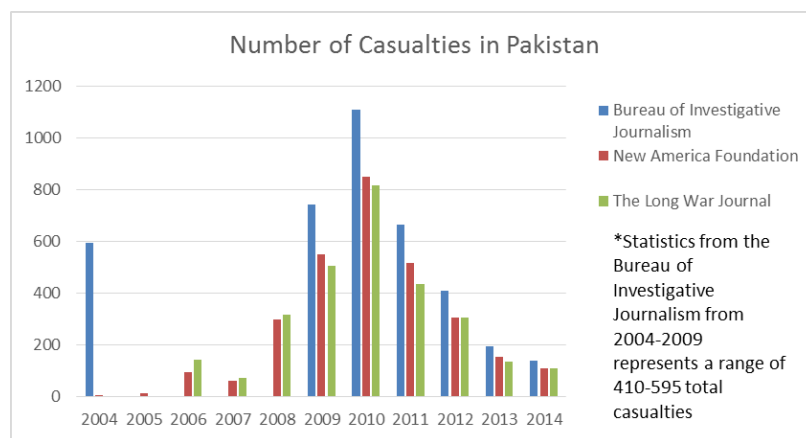


Figure 9

The amount of strikes continued to decrease in subsequent years. In 2012, between forty-eight and fifty strikes occurred, in 2013, between twenty-seven and twenty-eight occurred, and thus far in 2014 a total of seven strikes have been accounted

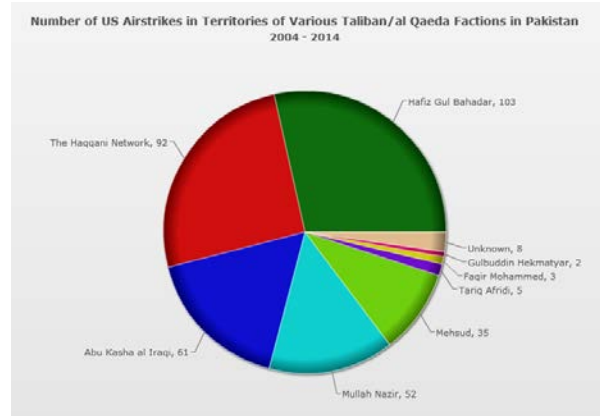
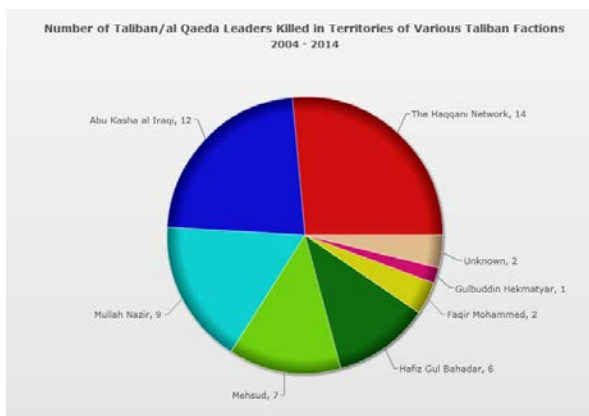
for in Pakistan. According to The Long War Journal, there have been a total of 361 strikes in Pakistan since 2004, with 72% hitting targets in North Waziristan, and 23% hitting targets in South Waziristan^{cliii}. At the height of the campaign, PRV strikes were hitting Waziristan as a whole once every four days. In North Waziristan, the strikes are centered primarily around Mir Ali, Miranshah, and Datta Khel; in South Waziristan, the area around Wana in Wazir tribal territory and Makin in the Shabi Khel Mahsud tribal territory were high target locations^{cliv}. Initially, these strikes were focused in South Waziristan on high value targets, however, following Pakistan's military invasion of the FATA in 2009 under intense U.S. pressure, strikes shifted to South Waziristan^{clv}.

Pakistan was the first state that the United States decided to experiment with the success of the signature strike policy. Beginning as far back as the closing months of the Bush administration, the CIA had conducted signature strikes against military aged males with known or unknown identities. When President Obama assumed office, DCIA Michael Hayden convinced the new President of the effectiveness of signature strikes and while President Obama agreed, there were more stipulations for authorization. Whereas during the Bush administration when the deputy director or the head of the CIA's CT center was all the authorization necessary to approve a strike, now the DCIA was required to sign off on each signature strike^{clvi}.

IMPACT ON RADICALIZATION

Pakistan has numerous groups of militant organizations, often times corresponding to various family and tribal factions. The largest Taliban groups based out of South Waziristan were being led by Maulvi Nazir and Waliur Rehman, prior to

their death via RPV strike on January 2, 2013 and May 29, 2013, respectively^{clvii}. Nazir was noted for his unique style of leadership, using his influence to expel foreign militants from his area, including regions in Afghanistan, and even signing a non-aggression pact with the Pakistani military in 2007 and 2009. He was reportedly replaced by a fellow tribesman named Salahud Din Ayubi^{clviii}. Groups originating from North Waziristan are the Haqqani Network, Hafiz Gul Bahadar, and Abu Kasha al Iraqi. Other notable groups are Hakeemullah Mehsud from Orakzai and Faqir Mohammed from Bajaur^{clix}. All of these groups are encompassed under the umbrella term Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which translates to Taliban Movement of Pakistan. Beginning in 2009, the RPV strikes specifically targeted those five largest TTP groups from North and South Waziristan. The Haqqani Network and tribal areas run by the organization have been hit with 25% of all strikes in 2009; the Mehsud tribal area has been hit with 21% of all strikes since the RPV campaign began in 2004. Overall, nearly 79% of all strikes in the FATA have targeted territories of these five tribes^{clx}.



Figures 10 and 11^{clxi}

Musharraf was determined to eliminate al Qaeda and its growing Pakistani support base at U.S. insistence. However as of 2007, according to Ryan Crocker, the last ambassador to Pakistan under the Bush administration, there had not yet been any orders to raise the issue of Taliban sanctuaries^{clxii}. Therefore, Musharraf endorsed Taliban fighters. Beginning in 2003, the ISI helped the Taliban raise funds in the Arabian Gulf states and facilitated their acquisition of guns and ammunition. The intelligence organization even set up training camps manned by their own officers in Baluchistan, while concurrently cooperating with the CIA in apprehending al Qaeda^{clxiii}. The Afghani Taliban used these bases in Pakistan to launch attacks in Afghanistan and recruit local Pashtuns. Eventually, these local recruits formed their own branch of the Taliban, the TTP.

Al Qaeda also has a presence in Pakistan along with Afghani and Uzbek Taliban members. In addition, there are anti-Indian jihadists groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba that have working relationships with the Taliban and al Qaeda branches within Pakistan^{clxiv}. Lashkar-e-Taiba, led by Hafiz Saeed, has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, and has a widespread presence in Karachi and Lahore, becoming a major political force through an extensive philanthropic network^{clxv}. Not only has the ISI trained the Lashkar-e-Taiba, but the Pakistani government has encouraged their recruitment efforts as part of their ongoing conflict with India. The Pakistani government considers the Taliban groups formerly ran by Nazir, the Haqqani's, Bahadar, and Hekmatyar, to all be non-threatening as none carry out attacks against the Pakistani state^{clxvi}.

Radicalization in Pakistan, similar to the situation in Yemen, is closely linked to discontent with the government and police state actors. The Pakistani government had welcomed Taliban support for a Muslim insurgency against Indian rule in Kashmir many times^{clxvii}. Pakistani people feel little unifying nationalism under a corrupt and often changing government. As Nawabzada Aurangzeb Jomezai, a Pathan tribal chieftain in Balochistan explained, “In Pakistan, only one institution works – the army...the police...are weak, corrupt and shambolic and dominated by the politicians...in the end, this country is always saved by the army”^{clxviii}. This complicated relationship Pakistani society feels about nationalism and identity within a relatively new state plagued with corruption has forced many to feel sympathetic towards the TTP. The Taliban is comprised of, after all, fellow Muslims who are simply attempting to create a stable, reliable government in their eyes. Other Pakistanis have viewed the TTP’s vituperative and often brutal action against the Pakistan military as personally offensive, driving the state into divisiveness.

A survey conducted by the New America Foundation polling 1,000 residents representing each of the seven FATA districts between June 30, 2010 and July 20, 2010 is revealing of the general attitude the local populace feels about RPV strikes and terrorist groups in their homeland^{clxix}. The survey was conducted using extensive quality control procedures, with respondents being selected using a multi-stage random stratified sampling methodology. The poll has a +/- 3 percent margin of error at the 95 percent confidence interval^{clxx}. While the poll revealed that three quarters of those surveyed opposed the use of RPV strikes within the FATA, each Agency produced

different numbers to come to this total. In North Waziristan, where sixty three percent of RPV strikes between 2004 and 2010 were conducted, just 9.7 percent surveyed supported RPV strikes; whereas in Orakzai, where only one strike had ever been reported at the time of the poll, seventeen percent supported them. In Bajaur, where three reported strikes had taken place, all during the Bush Administration, 46.5 percent supported the RPV campaign to eliminate terrorists. On the other hand, support for the TTP, a homegrown terrorist organization, in North and South Waziristan is 34.2 percent and 45.2 percent, respectively. However, when surveying the FATA as a whole, a mere nineteen percent support the TTP. Al Qaeda, being an entirely foreign military entity, received little support. As a whole, only 8.6 percent of FATA support the presence of al Qaeda.

Following the September, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and amidst turmoil in neighboring Afghanistan, President Bush urged Pakistani officials to capture Taliban and al Qaeda members crossing into Pakistan. Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist explained the situation thusly: “The influx after 2001 of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban into this region (FATA) has acted like an economic and religious engine, driving the process of radicalization”^{clxxi}. Initially in 2002, Pakistani army officers met with Wazir tribal ‘jirgas’, or a tribal council composed of the ‘mashar’, or elder^{clxxii}. The agreement that resulted from the meeting stated that the Pakistani military would allow tribesmen to handle the situation. However, under intense pressure from the U.S., Pakistan launched a large scale military operation in Waziristan, which was

followed by a full-out invasion of South Waziristan in 2004 under the perspicacity that al Qaeda's second in command Ayman al-Zawahiri was located there^{clxxiii}.

While Pakistan has been historically a consistently insecure state since its independence from the United Kingdom, the political crisis that President Pervez Musharraf created before his resignation in 2008 was the opportunity extremist groups such as the TTP needed to expand their sphere of influence. The chaos and violence that preceded the ousting of President Musharraf portended Pakistan's current political meltdown as well. The TTP movement began in December 2007, mostly in retaliation to President Musharraf's encroachment upon the FATA in the midst of peace talks^{clxxiv}. Waves of suicide bombers, 80% originating from South Waziristan, began hitting targets they perceived represented the central government including a Sri Lankan cricket team, and the police academy in Lahore^{clxxv}. In 2008, the district of Swat became the only district of Pakistan in which the TTP had complete administrative control^{clxxvi}. Attacks on Christians in 2013 were the highest in Pakistan's history. In September, 2013, Taliban-linked extremists detonated a bomb at a church in Peshawar, killing over 80 people in the blast^{clxxvii}. "We did it," explained Baitullah Mahsud of the Mahsud tribe and leader of a TTP branch, "as a retaliation for U.S. missile strikes off drones inside the Pakistan territory"^{clxxviii}.

When questioned about RPV strikes in tribal areas on the Pakistani/Afghani border, former CIA RPV director Robert Grenier was forthright in his criticism of the strike campaign. Grenier, who was head of the CIA's counterterrorist RPV program in 2005 and 2006, explained that "It's not just a matter of numbers of militants who are

operating in that area, it also affects the motivations of those militants.” Elsewhere in the highly disputed Kashmir region of Pakistan and outside of the RPV strike site, rebels seeking independence in Indian-controlled cities have joined forces with al Qaeda, thus empowering the extremist terrorist organization a larger geographic area. “They now see themselves as part of a global jihad,”^{clxxix} Grenier described of al Qaeda in Pakistan. “They are not just focused on helping oppressed Muslims in Kashmir or trying to fight the NATO and the American’s in Afghanistan, they see themselves as part of a global struggle, and therefore are a much broader threat than they were previously. So in a sense, yes, we have helped to bring about the situation that we most fear.”^{clxxx}

According to the Global Terrorism Database, terrorist activity in Pakistan began steadily increasing in 2004. In 2010, the number of attacks began dramatically increasing to over 2,000 incidents in 2013 alone. Not only did terrorism continue during periods of RPV strike inactivity until 2014, but they continued to increase. In 2014, in lieu of the United States’ decision to temporarily halt RPV strikes in Pakistan and Pakistan’s peace talks with the TTP, terrorist activity was met with a sharp decline^{clxxxi}. A few targeted strikes occurred early in the year, including the assassination of a senior police officer in January who had been campaigning against the TTP^{clxxxii}. However, beginning in June, TTP militants, along with members of the allied group The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, began strategically striking Pakistani military bases. An airport in Karachi was attacked, killing thirty on June 8, 2014^{clxxxiii}, just days prior to the U.S. resuming RPV strikes in Pakistan. Members of the TTP claimed that the attack was motivated by revenge over the killing of its leader,

Hakimullah Mehsud, who was killed in a U.S. RPV strike in November 2013^{clxxxiv}. A TTP spokesperson cited the attack was a warning to the Pakistani government “that we are still alive to react over the killings of innocent people in bomb attacks on their villages”^{clxxxv}. The attack followed failed peace talks between the TTP and the Pakistani government. Also in June, militants fired on a plane attempting to land in Peshawar; in August, 2014 TTP linked militants attacked two Air Force bases in the western Pakistani city of Quetta^{clxxxvi}.

While all RPV strikes are targeting terrorist organizations and persons in Pakistan, not all terrorist organizations in the state target the United States. Lashkar-e-Taiba, for instance, one of the largest, most disciplined terrorist organizations in Pakistan, is almost entirely involved with fighting the Indian military on the Kashmir border^{clxxxvii}. Pakistan invests financially into these organizations and offers them political asylum in order to avoid draining state military resources in their endless territory dispute. Organizations such as this are affected very little by RPV strikes, indicating that there are examples where a correlation between RPV strikes and radicalization does not exist.

PART VI: FUTURE RESEARCH

RPV's have demonstrated their unparalleled killing capabilities. Their design enables the device to enter a state, loiter, kill, and exit without risking the lives of Americans. However, RPV's and the policy surrounding them have many caveats that could indebt the U.S. into greater insecurity. In order to avoid this, there are a number of possible alternative policies which could alter the current trajectory for a more favorable resolution. The first path to be explored will be the current one: were the U.S. to continue relying almost solely on RPV's in Yemen and Pakistan, will the security threat ever diminish. Secondly, if the U.S. to increase kill/capture missions in conjunction with fewer RPV strikes, will this at all affect the number of harmful terrorist organizations in these two locations. Thirdly, a null hypothesis will answer whether a complete cessation of CIA and JSOC activities, primarily focused on RPV strikes, would in fact decrease the threat posed. These possible future endeavors could greatly impact radicalization in Yemen and Pakistan.

Research has indicated that terrorism in Pakistan and Yemen is primarily directed at their equally corrupt government that provides little human security. These are both structurally and systemically weak states with unstable governments and rampant poverty. Deep resentment felt among the populace has led to years of unsuccessful coups in both states and civil wars in Yemen. This regional political unrest has encouraged the growth of violent social behavior, directed internally and externally. Coupling the myriad of issues associated to fragile states with the fact that the U.S. is financially, diplomatically, and militarily supporting highly unpopular leaders in said

states creates a great deal of social tension. When these terrorist organizations feel their personal or national sovereignty has been violated, or that the transnational community of Muslims is being repressed by Western entities, including the United Nations, is when they react outside the normative behavior set by the international community.

One of the United States' first targets in Yemen, Mohammed Saleh Mohammed Ali al Kazemi, was an AQAP deputy in Yemen's Abyan province. He had evaded JSOC forces for months, until they were able to track Kazemi to the village of al-Majulah, where a suspected terrorist training camp had been constructed^{clxxxviii}. A capture mission was ruled out in favor of a cruise missile strike on the camp. The strike was approved and launched December 17, 2009. Rather than kill its intended target, the missile struck a Bedouin village, killing over forty people including fourteen women and twenty-one children^{clxxxix}. Amongst the carnage lay pieces of a Tomahawk cruise missile demarcated with English. Although this was not the first bombing the U.S. had ordered in Yemen, this particular instance was unique in its overt tactics and it instigated the Yemenis redirection of blame and hatred towards the United States. Not only was it clear that President Saleh was not providing for his people, but he was allowing other foreign governmental forces to violate their sovereignty by physically entering and killing at will. When this became the general opinion of Yemenis towards the United States, the regional security threat became a national security threat.

Were the United States to continue, increase, or even decrease the number of RPV strikes, the level of terrorist threat that Yemen poses would likely continue or

increase. Due to the importance revenge plays in tribal society, and high levels of pride and nationalism Yemen is characterized with, bombings and RPV strikes specifically could have a long lasting impact on U.S. national security. The Yemeni diaspora, as demonstrated by Anwar al Awlaki, could also respond in dramatic ways in efforts to defend fellow Yemenis and fellow Muslims, forming a global jihad against the United States. Gregory D. Johnsen described the situation: "When you kill people in Yemen, these are people who have families, they have clans, and they have tribes. And what we're seeing is that the United States might target a particular individual because they see him as a member of al Qaeda, but what's happening on the ground is that he's being defended as a tribesman". Johnsen pointed out the flaw in the U.S. aerial assassination campaign by stating "so you have people flowing into al Qaeda, not necessarily because they share the same ideology of al Qaeda, but just so that they can get revenge for their tribesman who has been killed in a drone strike"^{cxc}. Yemen's insecurity continues to plague itself, allowing an environment in which violence breeds uncontrollably. Just days following the strike in al-Majulah, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted his Christmas day bombing in Detroit. AQAP's numbers have more than tripled since this attempted attack, and the number of failed plots continues to climb.

While terrorist plots did recede significantly during the period of time when no RPV strikes were conducted from 2004-2008, these number are inconclusive being that al Qaeda in Yemen was nonoperational at this point.. Most of its members had been imprisoned or killed by the U.S. and Yemeni governments. Al Qaeda's initial formation in Yemen under the leadership of Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi had been weak and

ineffective, although had the United States allowed Harethi to continue, the group might have developed into a more formidable threat. As RPV strikes resumed and increased after 2009, so did AQAP's activity. AQAP attributed many of these attacks as counterattacks to RPV strikes, indicating that the strikes have in fact been a contributing factor to AQAP's threat to the U.S. Since the cruise missile strike in al-Majulah, which gave Yemenis irrefutable proof of U.S. involvement, AQAP has been relentless in pursuing the U.S. through the century old tribal tradition of revenge.

Pakistan has always posed a threat to U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Borders between these two states are very porous for tribal members who do not recognize the international delineation, often holding territory and dual citizenship in both states. Pakistani tribes readily traveled to Afghanistan to jihad against imposing Soviet troops in the 1980's, and have now taken jihad against, in their views, invading U.S. troops. Pakistan has greatly contributed to homegrown terrorism by proving a haven for terrorist training camps, where indoctrinated foreign nationals travel specifically to learn skill sets characteristic to al Qaeda. These individuals, often part of the homegrown terrorism phenomenon, are motivated by an ideology and seek to address perceived societal grievances they feel must be fulfilled through violent means^{cxci}. This was the case for the July 7, 2005 London bombers. All but one of the bombers, Germaine Lindsay from Jamaica, originated from England. Three of these four, excluding Lindsay, traveled to Pakistan, visiting several madrasa's known for their radical teaching just prior to the bombing they committed which killed 52 and injured over 700^{cxcii}. This case is far from unusual.

Furthermore, since TTP has such a large presence in North and South Waziristan where the majority of RPV strikes takes place, it is difficult to discern who is a threat. This kind of mentality turns every resident of North and South Waziristan, including innocent civilians, into TTP members and terrorists. On March 17, 2011, two RPV's fired at least seven Hellfire missiles, killing between twenty-six and forty-four people in Datta Khel, in North Waziristan^{cxci}. Initially, the U.S. claimed that all those who had been killed were militants, however, it was subsequently reported that the group had actually hit tribal elders engaged in a jirga. The jirga was held to settle a dispute between two tribes over a chromite mine. However, since the territory in dispute was controlled by the TTP, a high-ranking commander loyal to Taliban leader, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, officiated the meeting. While Bahadur was killed in the strike, which was presumably the purpose of the mission, many civilians also perished in the blast. The local population was infuriated by the deaths of so many respected tribal elders. One survivor insisted "It wasn't a militant gathering, but a meeting of tribal elders from Ismail Khan village to sort out some differences over a business deal." Other survivors corroborated that the jirga had been purely a business deal. Surviving elders demanded blood money from the United States for their slain family members, and one elder claimed the attack "will create resentment among the locals and everyone might turn into suicide bombers." Another elder who survived the blast was quoted referring to the attack, "we are a people who wait one hundred years to exact revenge. We never forgive our enemy."^{cxci}

If the past is any indication for a future trajectory of threatening terrorist activity, were kill/capture missions to be increased to partially or fully replace RPV strikes in Yemen, the threat would also decrease. Yemen does harbor high profile members of AQAP, who do pose a significant threat to the United States and have attempted on multiple occasions to strike U.S. territory. AQAP has proven that it is fully capable of replacing senior level militants, retaining loyal members over lengthy periods of time, and metamorphosing to survive. However, their persistent strikes against the U.S. have been in response to RPV and cruise missiles strikes. Were U.S. actions to be more covert, it is possible that the U.S. could repeatedly perform kill/capture missions against top AQAP officials, thereby removing the threat until AQAP can no longer function. While this is theoretically the most effective option, kill/capture missions were impossible in the case of Kazemi, which led to the cruise missile strike in al-Majulah, as well as in the case of Awlaki.

In Pakistan, due to the fact that the state has the seventh largest population in the world coupled with the sheer volume of terrorist organizations, mostly in the FATA, kill/capture missions are simply an unfeasible option. Each faction of the TTP has its own hierarchy, which, when added to the number of lower-level al Qaeda members in Pakistan, creates a daunting task when taken individually in kill/capture missions. In addition, kill/capture missions could also result in cases of mistaken identity and accidental death, as has been the case for many RPV strikes including the March 17, 2011 incident. These individuals, particularly TTP members, have created little threat for the U.S. homeland, preferring to conduct terrorist attacks against their own state

and military. Therefore, kill/capture missions would likely have no effect on U.S. national security, nor would it decrease terrorist activity within Pakistan. Unlike in Yemen, where fewer covert kill/capture missions have been reported, Pakistanis have taken notice of covert U.S. affairs within the FATA and are deeply offended by the collateral damage, including destruction of property and civilian deaths. Thus, increasing the policy would only work to further damage the relationship between the U.S. and the FATA.

Finally, a null hypothesis in Yemen and Pakistan would presumably create the same effect in each state. Clearly it is difficult to extrapolate the exact causation between the cessation of the RPV campaign in Yemen and Pakistan to the level of terrorist activity. However, by assessing previous lulls in strikes in both states, were the United States to end its RPV campaign in these two states, radicalization and terrorist attacks within Pakistan and Yemen would continue. In Pakistan, during the six month lull from December 2013 till June 2014, there was a period of inactivity among TTP and al Qaeda militants; this was curtailed prior to the United States resuming attacks, demonstrating little correlation. The United States has drastically limited the number of strikes in each state since their peak in 2011 and 2012 in Pakistan and Yemen, respectively. Yet the level of violent extremism in each state has continued to grow. Attacks against the U.S. specifically are often counterattacks to RPV strikes, which could mean that eventually, tribal grievances will be forgiven. While terrorist activity might continue in these allied states, it does not necessarily equal a threat to the United States.

PART VII: CONCLUSION

These findings have demonstrated that the argument revolving around RPV's is relevant and necessary. Remotely piloted vehicles, armed or unarmed, are quickly and increasingly being used in the arsenal of unconventional warfare. The United States has operated RPV's not only in Yemen and Pakistan, but Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya^{CXCV}. Israel, China and Iran have all developed RPV's, and even the non-state actor Hezbollah has flown at least two RPV's over Israel. Aside from the legal complications RPV's impose on the International Community, it is just as important to determine whether or not armed RPV's are an effective strategy of war and counterterrorism.

Clearly, certain terrorist organizations in Yemen and Pakistan have proven that they do represent a significant enough threat to take action. United States policy has dictated that the most appropriate action is to use the RPS, usually with the approval of the host state's President, to circumscribe that threat and not risk American lives in the process. While many analysts have scrutinized their legality and proliferation, the scope of this work has been to establish the basis of their use. If RPV's prove effective in two vastly differing states such as Yemen and Pakistan, then the discussion of their legal framework should continue. However, if they are ineffective at reducing terrorist threats emerging from these two states, alternative policies were also explored. While the armed RPV might be a tactical success in other locations and against other enemies, Yemen and Pakistan have been chosen to be representative for unconventional war between the United States and a non-state military actor.

There have been no acts of sectarian terrorism committed on United States soil since the 9/11 terrorist attacks that were perpetrated by any terrorist organization originating in Yemen and Pakistan. While some horrific acts of sectarian terrorism have been attributed or inspired by AQAP or the TTP, namely the Boston Marathon Bombing and the Fort Hood shooting, the perpetrators were not specifically affiliated, given orders or supplied materials by any terrorist organization. Although the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attempted Times Square bombing in 2010, there is little actual evidence to support this claim. Nidal Malik Hasan, the perpetrator behind the Fort Hood mass shooting in 2009, was in contact with Imam Anwar Al-Awlaki for six months prior to the attack. The FBI intercepted 18 emails between the two men, in which Hasan would ask religious guidance on “when jihad is appropriate, and whether it is permissible if there are innocents killed in a suicide attack”^{cxvii}, however they concluded that there was no content of concern^{cxviii}. This was the extent of Hasan’s involvement with any Pakistani or Yemeni terrorist organization. Furthermore, Hasan never claimed or affiliated himself with AQAP. AQAP, which has always been regarded as the most loyal to Osama bin Laden’s original construct, has plotted many attempted but ultimately failed terrorist attacks. Pakistan’s terrorist cells are largely an implosion of political weakness; however they have been indirectly responsible for inspiring acts of homegrown terrorism, mostly in Europe. The perpetrator in the attempted Times Square bombing, a native of Pakistan who had lived in the United States many years, had traveled back to Pakistan a few months prior to the attempt to train with the TTP specifically in bomb making^{cxviii}.

United States policy has resulted in another sharp decrease in RPV strikes in both states, approaching strike numbers resembling those during the Bush Administration. As al Qaeda in Yemen demonstrated the last time the United States underestimated their potential for bellicosity, al Qaeda used this time to become stronger. As always, it is vital to excogitate that not every citizen of Yemen and Pakistan is a terrorist, nor even that every organization the United States labels as a terrorist organization possesses the intent to harm the United States. As previously stated, there have been no successful terrorist attacks carried out by members of terrorist organizations based out of Yemen and Pakistan. If the United States were to continue defensive security measures without becoming involved militarily, it would presumably result in a more effective national security. Any military action against Pakistan and Yemen has shown little positive impact in the radicalization of these states.

Unfortunately, due to the U.S. show of force in Yemen and Pakistan through not only RPV's, but cruise missiles and covert CIA and JSOC missions, retaliation from both of these states will most likely continue despite alternative or similar policy adjustments. While RPV strikes are successful killing machines, due to their inherent inaccuracy and threat to state sovereignty, the aerial assassination campaign has strained relations with tribal groups in Yemen and Pakistan. Not only are RPV's continuously striking organizations that demonstrate intrepid and persistent qualities that rebuild after each strike, they aid in their conviction against the United States. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy of RPV strikes creating terrorists, and terrorist organization convincing tribespeople to violently seek revenge against their invader. If

these relationships were to be repaired, their threat could be diminished through a joint effort to stabilize and remove the threat from these two extremely fragile states.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Micah Zenko. Interview with Jim Zirin. *The Digital Age* (April, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvtgfFgAlz0>.
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Appendix

Created by Bill Roggio (The Long War Journal)

Since 2004, the US has been conducting a covert program to target and kill al Qaeda and Taliban commanders based in Pakistan's lawless northwest. The program has targeted top al Qaeda leaders, al Qaeda's external operations network, and Taliban leaders and fighters that threaten both the Afghan and Pakistani states. Last updated on July 23, 2014. <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes-hvts.php>.

Killed in 2014:

Taj al Makki, Abu Abdurahman al Kuwaiti, and Fayez Awda al Khalidi
The three al Qaeda operatives are said to be mid-level commanders.
Date thought killed: July 10, 2014.

Haji Gul, Mufti Sofian, and Commander Abu Bakar.
Haji Gul was a senior Haqqani Network commander. Mufti Sofian and Commander Abu Bakar were senior commanders in the Afghan Taliban.
Date reported killed: June 11-12, 2014.

Killed in 2013:

Abdul Rehman, Mufti Hamidullah Haqqani, and Maulvi Ahmed Jan
The three men served as senior Haqqani Network commanders. Maulvi Ahmed Jan is said to be an aide to Sirajuddin Haqqani. Date reported killed: Nov. 21, 2013.

Hakeemullah Mehdsud
The emir of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.
Date killed: Nov. 1, 2013.

Mullah Sangeen Zadran
The deputy to Haqqani Network operational commander Sirajuddin Haqqani. He also served as the Taliban's shadow governor in Paktika province, Afghanistan.
Date killed: Sept. 5, 2013.

Abu Rashid, Muhammed Ilyas Kuwaiti, and Muhammed Sajid Yamani
Three mid-level al Qaeda military trainers.
Date killed: July 28, 2013.

Abu Saif al Jaziri and Maulana Akhtar Zadran
Abu Saif al Jaziri was a senior al Qaeda military trainer. Maulana Akhtar Zadran was a Haqqani Network commander.

Date killed: July 28, 2013.

Waliur Rehman

The deputy emir of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan and the group's leader in South Waziristan.

Date killed: May. 28, 2013.

Abu Ubaydah Abdullah al Adam

Abu Ubaydah Abdullah al Adam is al Qaeda's intelligence chief and a propagandist for Vanguards of the Khorasan.

Date thought killed: Either April 14 or April 17, 2013.

Sheikh Yasin Al Kuwaiti

A key al Qaeda paramilitary commander in the Shadow Army who operated in Pakistan's tribal areas.

Date killed: Jan. 8, 2013.

Wali Mohammed

A commander who is said to have directed suicide operations for the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.

Date killed: Jan. 6, 2013.

Faisal Khan

Khan was a mid-level commander in Hakeemullah Mehsud's Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.

Date killed: Jan. 3, 2013.

Mullah Nazir, Atta Ullah, Rafey Khan, Rata Khan

Mullah Nazir led the Taliban faction in the Wazir areas of South Waziristan. He identified himself as an al Qaeda leader and waged jihad in Afghanistan. Atta Ullah and Rafey Khan were Nazir's deputies; Rata Khan was a senior military commander.

Date killed: Jan. 3, 2013.

Killed in 2012:

Mohammad Ahmed al Mansoor

Mohammad Ahmed al Mansoor was a mid-level al Qaeda commander.

Date killed: Dec. 9, 2012.

Khalid bin Abdul Rahman al Husainan

Husainan, who is also known as a Abu Zeid al Kuwaiti, served as a senior cleric and ideologue.

Date thought killed: Dec. 7, 2012.

Abdul Rehman al Zaman Yemeni

Abdul Rehman al Zaman Yemeni was a mid-level al Qaeda commander.

Date thought killed: Dec. 1, 2012.

Sheikh Abdul Bari

Sheikh Abdul Bari was a mid-level al Qaeda commander.

Date thought killed: Nov. 29, 2012.

Hassan Ghul

Hassan Ghul served as Osama bin Laden's emissary to Abu Musab al Zarqawi before his capture in Iraq in 2004. He was held by the US, transferred to Pakistan, released in 2007, and returned al Qaeda to serve as a senior operative.

Date killed: Oct. 1, 2012.

Abu Kasha al Iraqi and Fateh al Turki

Abu Kasha al Iraqi served as a top al Qaeda leader in the Mir Ali area in North Waziristan. Fateh al Turki was a senior al Qaeda military leader.

Date thought killed: Sept. 25, 2012.

Badraddin Haqqani

A top deputy and brother of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the operational commander of the Haqqani Network.

Date killed: He is believed to have been killed in one of 5 strikes in August 2012.

Abdul Shakoar Turkistani

The leader of the Turkistan Islamic Party and al Qaeda's operations chief in Pakistan's tribal areas.

Date thought killed: Aug. 24, 2012.

Engineer Ahsan Aziz

A Kashmiri jihadist linked to Hizbul Mujahideen who served as an al Qaeda commander.

Date killed: Aug. 18, 2012.

Abu Yahya al Libi

Abu Yahya was a Libyan citizen, and served as al Qaeda's chief of staff and senior cleric and ideologue.

Date killed: June 4, 2012.

Abu Usman Adil

Abu Usman Adil was the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and spearhead the expansion of the group's operations in Afghanistan.

Date killed: April 29, 2012.

Badr Mansoor

Mansoor, a Pakistani citizen, served as al Qaeda's leader in Pakistan and a key link to the Taliban and Pakistani jihadist groups.

Date killed: Feb. 9, 2012.

Aslam Awan

Awan, who is also known as Abdullah Khorasani, is a deputy to the leader of al Qaeda's external operations network and a Pakistani citizen.

Date killed: Jan. 11, 2012.

Qari Hussain Mehsud

Qari Hussain was a top leader in the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan who also ran suicide training camps and planned suicide operations.

The exact date of his death is unknown but he was rumored to have been killed in a US drone strike in January 2012.

Killed in 2011:

Hazrat Omar, Khan Mohammed, Miraj Wazir, and Ashfaq Wazir

Omar was Mullah Nazir's brother who served as the group's operational commander in Afghanistan. Mohammed, a senior deputy to Nazir. Miraj Wazir and Ashfaq Wazir were senior commanders.

Date killed: Oct. 27, 2011.

Abu Miqdad al Masri

A member of al Qaeda's Shura Majlis who also was involved in al Qaeda's external operations.

Date killed: Oct. 13-14, 2011 (exact date is unclear)

Abd al Rahman al Yemeni

A senior operative who was involved in al Qaeda's external operations network.

Date killed: Oct. 13-14, 2011 (exact date is unclear).

Jan Baz Zadran

Siraj Haqqani's deputy who served as the number three for the terror network.

Date killed: Oct. 13, 2011.

Haleem Ullah

A deputy commander to North Waziristan Taliban leader Hafiz Gul Bahadar.

Date killed: Sept. 30, 2011.

Abu Hafs al Shahri

A senior al Qaeda leader who served as the operations chief for Pakistan.

Date killed: Sept. 11, 2011.

Atiyah Abd al Rahman

A senior al Qaeda leader who served as Osama bin Laden's chief of staff and a top operational commander.

Date killed: Aug. 22, 2011.

Ilyas Kashmiri

The leader of al Qaeda's Lashkar al Zil and the operational commander of the Harkat ul Jihad-i-Islami. He also was a member of al Qaeda's external operations council.

Date killed: June 3, 2011.

Abu Zaid al Iraqi

A senior al Qaeda operative who served as the top financial officer in Pakistan.

Date killed: Feb. 20, 2011.

Killed in 2010:

Ibn Amin

A senior al Qaeda and Taliban military commander who led forces in Swat in Pakistan.

Date reported killed: Dec. 17, 2010.

Mohammed Usman

Mohammed Usman was a key member of Ilyas Kashmiri's Brigade 313, al Qaeda's military formation in Pakistan, and also helped to unite al Qaeda with multiple Pakistani terror groups. He served as a key aide to Osama bin Laden.

Date reported killed: One of several strikes in October 2010.

Sheikh Fateh al Masri

Al Qaeda's leader in Afghanistan and Pakistan (or the Khorasan).

Date reported killed: Sept. 25, 2010.

Saifullah Haqqani

A Haqqani Network military commander in Afghanistan and a cousin of Siraj Haqqani.

Date reported killed: Sept. 14, 2010.

Qureshi

An Islamic Jihad Group commander who trained Germans and other foreigners in North Waziristan and then sent them back to their home countries.

Date reported killed: Sept. 8, 2010.

Inayatullah

A Taliban military commander based in North Waziristan.

Date reported killed: Sept. 3, 2010.

Hamza al Jawfi

An Egyptian who led the al Qaeda-allied Pakistani terror group known as Jundallah.

Date killed: June 29, 2010.

Abu Ahmed

An al Qaeda military commander who conducted operations in Afghanistan.

Date killed: June 19, 2010.

Sheikh Ihsanullah

An al Qaeda military commander who conducted operations in Afghanistan.

Date killed: June 10, 2010.

Ibrahim

The commander of the Fursan-i-Mohammed Group, an al Qaeda group based in North Waziristan.

Date killed: June 10, 2010.

Osama bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Damjan al Dawsari

A senior operative and key link with the Taliban in South Waziristan, Pakistan. He also facilitated operations in Afghanistan.

Date killed: May 28, 2010.

Mustafa Abu Yazid

Yazid, who is also known as Sheikh Saeed al Masri, is al Qaeda's leader in Afghanistan and top financial official.

Date killed: May 21, 2010.

Sadam Hussein Al Hussami

A senior operative in al Qaeda's external operations network who was involved in the suicide attack that killed seven CIA officials in Khost. Hussami is also known as Ghazwan al Yemeni.

Date killed: March 8, 2010.

Qari Mohammad Zafar

A leader of the al Qaeda and Taliban-linked Fedayeen-i-Islam wanted by the US for attacking the US Consulate in Karachi in 2006

Date killed: February 24, 2010.

Mohammed Haqqani

A mid-level Haqqani Network military commander and brother of the group's top military commander Siraj Haqqani.

Date killed: February 18, 2010.

Sheikh Mansoor

An al Qaeda Shadow Army commander who was based in North Waziristan and operated in eastern Afghanistan.

Date killed: February 17, 2010.

Abdul Haq al Turkistani

A member of al Qaeda's Shura Majlis and the leader of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party.

Date killed: February 14, 2010.

Abdul Basit Usman

The US has a \$1 million bounty on Abdul Basit Usman, an Abu Sayyaf master bomb maker, for conducting attacks that murdered civilians. Usman's death is unconfirmed, however.

Date thought killed: January 14, 2010.

Jamal Saeed Abdul Rahim

An Abu Nidal Organization operative who participated in killing 22 hostages during the 1986 hijacking of Pan Am flight 73.

Date reported killed: January 9, 2010.

Mansur al Shami

An al Qaeda ideologue and aide to Mustafa Abu Yazid.

Date killed: Exact date is not known, he was last seen on As Sahab on January 4, 2010.

Killed in 2009:

Haji Omar Khan

A senior Taliban leader in North Waziristan.

Date killed: December 31, 2010

Abdullah Said al Libi

The top commander of the Lashkar al Zil, al Qaeda's Shadow Army.

Date thought killed: December 17, 2009 (exact date is not known)

Zuhaib al Zahib

A commander in the Lashkar al Zil, al Qaeda's Shadow Army.

Date killed: December 17, 2009

Saleh al Somali

The leader of al Qaeda's external network.

Date killed: December 8, 2009

Abu Musa al Masri
A senior al Qaeda explosive expert and trainer.
Date killed: October 21, 2009

Najmuddin Jalolov
The leader of the Islamic Jihad Group, a breakaway faction of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. He was closely allied with al Qaeda.
Date killed: September 14, 2009

Maulvi Ismail Khan
A military commander in the Haqqani Network.
Date killed: September 8, 2009

Mustafa al Jaziri
A senior military commander for al Qaeda who sits on al Qaeda's military shura.
Date killed: September 7, 2009

Tahir Yuldashev
The leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.
Date killed: August 27, 2009

Baitullah Mehsud
The overall leader of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.
Date killed: August 5, 2009

Kifayatullah Anikhel
A Taliban commander under Baitullah Mehsud.
Date killed: July 7, 2009

Mufti Noor Wali
A suicide bomber trainer for the Taliban and al Qaeda.
Date killed: July 3, 2009

Khwaz Ali Mehsud
A senior deputy to Baitullah Mehsud.
Date killed: June 23, 2009

Abdullah Hamas al Filistini
A senior al Qaeda trainer.
Date killed: April 1, 2009

Osama al Kini (aka Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam)
Al Qaeda's operations chief for Pakistan who was wanted for the 1998 bombings

against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Date killed: January 1, 2009

Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan

A senior aide to Osama al Kini who was wanted for the 1998 bombings against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Date killed: January 1, 2009

Sa'ad bin Laden

One of Osama bin Laden's sons who served as a senior al Qaeda leader in Iran and was involved in several plots. He was considered to be a possible successor of Osama. The exact date of his death is not known.

Killed in 2009

Rashid Rauf

A senior al Qaeda leader who directed plots in the United Kingdom from Pakistan. Date killed: The exact date is unknown, he was reported killed in 2008 but was later implicated in a plot in Europe in 2009.

Killed in 2008:

Abu Zubair al Masri

Served as an explosives expert for al Qaeda as well as a leader.

Date killed: November 21, 2008

Abdullah Azzam al Saudi

Served as liaison between al Qaeda and the Taliban operating in Pakistan's northwest. Azzam facilitated al Qaeda's external operations network. He also served as a recruiter and trainer for al Qaeda.

Date killed: November 19, 2008

Abu Jihad al Masri

The leader of the Egyptian Islamic Group and the chief of al Qaeda's intelligence branch, and directed al Qaeda's intelligence shura. He directed al Qaeda's external operations in Egypt.

Date killed: October 31, 2008

Khalid Habib

The commander of the Lashkar al Zil or the Shadow Army, al Qaeda's paramilitary forces in Pakistan's northwest and Afghanistan.

Date killed: October 16, 2008

Abu al Hasan al Rimi

A senior al Qaeda operative.

Date killed: October 2008 - exact date unknown

Abu Ubaidah al Tunisi

An al Qaeda military commander who fought against the Russians in Afghanistan.

Date killed: September 17, 2008

Abu Musa

An al Qaeda operative from Saudi Arabia.

Date killed: September 8, 2008

Abu Qasim

An al Qaeda operative from Egypt.

Date killed: September 8, 2008

Abu Hamza

An explosives expert from Saudi Arabia who served as al Qaeda's commander in Peshawar.

Date killed: September 8, 2008

Abu Haris

A senior al Qaeda military commander from Syria who led more than 250 Arab and Afghan fighters under the guise of the Jaish al Mahdi in Helmand province. He became al Qaeda's operations chief in the tribal areas in 2008.

Date killed: September 8, 2008

Abu Wafa al Saudi

An al Qaeda commander and logistician.

Date killed: September 4, 2008

Abdul Rehman

A local Taliban commander in the Wana region in South Waziristan.

Date killed: August 13, 2008

Abu Khabab al Masri

The chief of al Qaeda's weapons of mass destruction program and a master bomb maker.

Date killed: July 28, 2008

Abu Mohammad Ibrahim bin Abi al Faraj al Masri

A religious leader, close to Abu Khabab al Masri.

Date killed: July 28, 2008

Abdul Wahhab al Masri

A senior aide to Abu Khabab al Masri.

Date killed: July 28, 2008

Abu Islam al Masri
Aide to Abu Khabab al Masri.
Date killed: July 28, 2008

Abu Sulayman Jazairi
The chief of al Qaeda's external network. Jazairi was a senior trainer, an explosives expert, and an operational commander tasked with planning attacks on the West.
Date killed: May 14, 2008

Dr. Arshad Waheed (aka Sheikh Moaz)
A mid-level al Qaeda leader.
Date killed: March 16, 2008

Abu Laith al Libi
Senior military commander in Afghanistan and the leader of the reformed Brigade 055 in al Qaeda's paramilitary Shadow Army.
Date killed: January 29, 2008

Killed in 2007:

No senior al Qaeda or Taliban leaders or operatives were reported killed during the strikes in 2007.

Killed in 2006:

Liaquat Hussain
Second-in-command of the Bajaur TNSM.
Date killed: October 30, 2006

Imam Asad
Camp commander for the Black Guard, al Qaeda's elite bodyguard for Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri. Asad was a Chechen with close links to Shamil Basayev.
Date killed: March 1, 2006

Killed in 2005:

Abu Hamza Rabia
Al Qaeda's operational commander. He was involved with two assassination plots against Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.
Date killed: December 1, 2005

Haitham al Yemeni

A senior al Qaeda's explosives expert who also is thought to have been close to Osama bin Laden and Abu Faraj al Libi.

Date killed: May 15, 2005

Killed in 2004:

Nek Mohammed

A senior Taliban commander in South Waziristan who had links to Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar.

Date killed: June 18, 2004